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BORN TO FIGHT



On the bridge of the *South Dakota*, Admiral Halsey smiled as he sighted Golden Gate on his triumphant return from Pacific war. (International)

BORN TO FIGHT

THE LIFE OF ADMIRAL HALSEY



RALPH B. JORDAN

Philadelphia

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PREVIEW



ON a warm summery day in the fall of 1945, a bull-jawed admiral named William F. Halsey, Jr., stood on the flag bridge of the U. S. battleship *Missouri*, the mightiest thing afloat on any ocean. He then had reached the height of his fame, was on the threshold of honored retirement in his native America, and was known throughout the world for the sharpness of his tongue and his caustic hatred of the Japanese.

It was a historic moment, for an aide handed him a brief message from Washington. The Japanese had surrendered unconditionally, accepting the peace terms set at Potsdam, and all around him waited, in the electric tension that followed his reading, knowing that he would unquestionably come forth with some comment due to make military history, and perhaps be responsible for another of the sensations, the many red faces, that had provided sharp interludes in the three and a half years of war in the Pacific.

Halsey didn't think for long. He snapped out his general order to the ships and men of the powerful

United States Third Fleet, strung out in a majestic line behind him—battleships, carriers, cruisers, destroyers—all the strength of the greatest flotilla of warcraft ever to sail the seas. This was what he said:

“It looks like the war is over. Cease firing, but if you see any enemy planes in the air—” he hesitated, then continued softly—“shoot them down in friendly fashion.”

It is in the tradition of the American Navy, of course, for top-flight heroes to coin enduring phrases. There was Commodore Perry with Mugford’s “Don’t give up the ship” floating at his masthead; thirty-seven years afterwards, David Farragut and his “Damn the torpedoes” at Mobile Bay in 1864; and Admiral Dewey with his immortal “You may fire when you are ready, Gridley” at the battle of Manila in 1898.

Halsey added this postwar classic to a long earlier string of colorful epithets and phrases. He had sent hundreds of his planes in against the Japanese capital that morning, and was watching one of our big carriers which had swung out of line to drive into the wind so its planes could lift more easily from the flight deck, a sight which Halsey as an air enthusiast had been observing and enjoying for years.

The guns of the great fleet were stilled at last. The men who had fired them, and their comrades in the skies, had rewritten the books of warfare in thousands of miles of bloody fighting across the Pacific under command of this tougher-than-leather American naval officer who had thrown so many of the books and the

regulations out the window at the start of the war. Here was fruitage of his initial order, which was to become the password to victory: "ATTACK Repeat ATTACK."

Admiral Halsey first put his treasured ambition in words when he sailed into Pearl Harbor, only a few hours after the Japanese had struck. Because he had been on a secret mission in command of a task force, he and his ships had been spared almost certain destruction or disablement, along with the members of the fleet caught at the base. His flag was floating then from the old and now outmoded carrier *Enterprise*, the indestructible and indomitable vessel which, like the *Constitution* or "Old Ironsides," is to be kept permanently as a memorial. In the Big E the older tradition was to live again in a new heroic epic of fire, blood and unbelievable bravery. Halsey then said that he intended to fight on until "the Japanese language will be spoken only in Hell." His hatred of the enemy mounted as their savagery came to be common knowledge, as their general untrustworthiness became a by-word everywhere. He enunciated his general philosophy when he went into the Solomons, a little later, and was asked what his plans were.

"Kill Japs," he said, and then added, "They're rats." He kept calling them this in one way or another until 1943, when he suddenly switched to bastards. Then there was a spell when they were monkeys, and he finally combined the best features of each with something added, so that the Japanese ended up by becoming, in

his colorful vocabulary, "lousy yellow rat monkey bastards." Climax of his sentiment on the subject was his continually quoted desire to "kick them all in the face."

How much of all this hard and profane language represented a genuine personal animus, and how much the clever, psychological in-fighting of a man who knew every trick in the book of war—and could invent three more for each one of them—is a question for historians to worry over. The important fact is that Halsey never gave his opponents the aid or comfort of a single idea. Indeed, when in November, 1944, the Third Fleet had drawn away from the Japanese for a few days to refuel, then had got underway again for another attack, and when the Tokyo radio started asking, in an insolent and challenging tone, "Where is the American Navy?" he turned to an aide and said, brusquely, "Send them our latitude and longitude!"

Here then is the man—

Where did he come from, and how did he get that way—

That is a story to be told!

BORN TO FIGHT

1



THE blood which has its colorful representation in Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., comes down from forebears among whom were well-behaved individuals, also some who were lawless and bold adventurers. The admiral, however, dismisses the whole business of his genealogy as "among the imponderables."

At his South Pacific headquarters he was asked whence the clan sprang and gave the answer, "Out of a tree." When pressed, he said, "I don't know much about my family tree, but there were a couple of old boys in the outfit who interest me. One was a pirate. His specialty was scaring women and children, and slitting throats. He devised a new technique for cutting an innocent neck from ear to ear with practically no lost motion. Would you like me to describe it?"

"No, thanks," said the questioner. "Just tell me about the other one."

"He is listed in our family records as 'A man of French extraction and gigantic stature, who died from becoming intoxicated and falling into a fireplace, from

which he was unable to extricate himself.' Wasn't he a fascinating character?"

The best the correspondent was ever able to extract from the admiral was the opinion that Halsey is a very common name in the United States. He added that he was unfamiliar with its derivation or significance, but that he had seen Halsey streets all over, including those in New Orleans, Seattle, Brooklyn, Charleston, Chicago and Astoria, Oregon.

Halsey's daughter, Mrs. P. Lea Spruance, at her home near Wilmington, Delaware, explained the matter of the pirate and the fascinating character in the fireplace almost as lightly. "He always does that," she said. "Only sometimes it's a horse thief."

The fact is, however, that a search among the accounts left by bygone Halseys discloses some highly interesting personalities, if not altogether quite equal to those of whom the admiral speaks. The first Halseys in America—at least the first of the admiral's line, who arrived at a very early date—set a pattern of independence of thought and action which carried down nicely to William F., Jr. On the feminine side of his genealogy, we find that the first Mrs. Halsey in America was scalped by Indians and remained unique in history as the only woman ever treated in that fashion by the redskins in her particular section of New York. Her husband was a seventeenth-century individualist who definitely wore no man's collar. He would fight at the drop of his big, broad-brimmed hat, either in court or out, for what he considered his rights. He was jeal-

ous of these "rights" and played a part in establishing the equality of man in early-day Nieu Amsterdam.

Among the many Halsey traffic thoroughfares is a little one, Halsey's Neck Lane, in Southampton, Long Island. It runs from Hill Street to Dune Road and dates back to 1657. No doubt it was named for one of the admiral's Halseys because they first settled in this area. Most of the other Halsey streets around the country could identify descendants of the same pioneers, however, since the representatives of the line were prolific and took to traveling as the United States grew into a nation, and as the tide of development swept westward.

The original American Halsey seems to have been Thomas, who was born in Hertfordshire, England in 1591, and who died in the New World in 1679. He left his ancestral acres—and there must have been some, because he had a coat of arms—and crossed the seas in 1637. It was a rough trip, according to the accounts he left, also a long one, but he was rugged. The tiny sailing craft was blown off its course. Food and water ran low, so that he was often thirsty, hungry and tired, but never seasick. For that he was thankful, if for little else. It was a beastly voyage, he said, and he was glad to get ashore at Nieu Amsterdam.

Thomas did not tarry long in the village which was to become New York. He and some comrades helped lay out the Long Island colony of Southampton. His writings reveal that he married a girl named Phoebe, but further than that he is somewhat indefinite, except

when he adds the fact, already mentioned, that she was killed and scalped about 1649. Thomas' grief was deep and his anger very real. He took steps to insure that the outrage was not duplicated. Indians daubed with paint and upon the warpath visited his colony no more, and it is only too bad that the record does not tell just what the steps were by which he accomplished his purpose.

His associates in the Southampton venture included eighteen other new arrivals in America. They crossed Long Island Sound from Nieu Amsterdam in a boat which they had purchased. Storms seemed to be partial to Thomas Halsey, for the heavens howled down upon the little craft in the Sound, and its passengers thought for a time that they would meet an untimely end, although land was in sight in almost any direction—a prospect altogether full of irony in view of their voyages across thousands of miles on the Atlantic.

The wind tumbled them upon the western shore near the end of Long Island, and they barely took time to dry themselves before starting to build. Soon, however, came trouble from Nieu Amsterdam. Representatives of the Dutch government made some kind of a demand on the settlers and their anger was aroused. Probably it had to do with land titles or taxes. At any rate, Thomas Halsey, as leader of the colony, told the Dutch in clear and unmistakable English (probably as colorful as that which his descendant, William F., Jr., was to use three hundred years later in reference to the Japanese) exactly where they could go, and what they

could do with their land. And forthwith he moved his colony to the eastern side of the island, announcing it as free and independent, associated with no European state. He had had enough trouble with the Hollanders, and of course he wanted very little more of his fellow English.

Soon, however, Halsey and his compatriots cooled off and decided that they would tie up their destinies with the Connecticut Colony. Halsey signed for his group, signing his name instead of an "X," as did so many of the settlers. His later activities, as a matter of fact, showed him to have considerable education. He not only signed papers, but wrote them. He fixed tax rates, surveyed land and settled boundary lines. But he came in for censure. He was ahead of his time, apparently. At least he was an individualist.

He was "censured" in 1643 for "unreverent speeches" to Daniel Howe, the magistrate, in court. The magistrate "banished" him from the colony, but Halsey only went home, and in a few days the Honorable Mr. Howe decided that Thomas Halsey was too valuable to send away, and the decree was set aside. Three years later, however, in 1646, the irascible Halsey was in court difficulties again, this time for "hindering the quiet proceedings of the court and causing them to lose their tyme by his willfull obstinacy." Then in 1654, according to the records, Thomas got into a real row at the bar of justice. It was something to do with the "trespassing of a horse." Halsey was fined two shillings plus court costs, but the court significantly charged the

jury "to meddle not with determining whose horse it is," the historical incident which may be the basis for the modern admiral's light-hearted remarks about ancestral horse-thieves. Doughty old Thomas, be it said, was not one to be swayed by a mere magistrate. He appealed to the higher courts in Connecticut and kept on appealing and fighting the case until its final disposition has been lost in a fog of antiquity. However, his activities apparently were entirely in keeping with the times, for a contemporary wrote that "lawing seems to be the favorite sport of these Long Islanders. They are forever disputing about land or fences or catell or their whale shares."

The early Halseys also went in heavily for whaling, and William F., Jr., and his father before him, came naturally by their love of the sea. Whale ships commanded by their Long Island forebears sailed in a steady string for the far-off whaling grounds in the seven seas. Between 1814 and 1852, for instance, twelve whalers out of one little Long Island port were captained by Halseys. Captain Eliphalet Halsey took the first Long Island whale ship around Cape Horn on a voyage which began in 1815 and lasted three years. Another Halsey whaler was lost off the coast of Japan in 1834, so that if he was captured and slain by the Japanese—as was often their practice with captives at that time—his death was particularly revenged by a member of the line in the 1940s. Other sons and grandsons of Thomas Halsey scattered in easily traceable migrations to North Carolina, in 1694, as well as

to Connecticut and to New Jersey and elsewhere.

Tracing the progeny of the redoubtable Thomas, one of his sons, Captain Isaac, who was born in England in 1628 and died at Southampton in 1725, had a son, Joseph, who was born at Southampton in 1668 and died in Elizabeth, N. J., in 1725, the same year as his father. Joseph's wife, Elizabeth, was a Halsey, too. One of Joseph's great-grandsons, Jacob Benson Halsey, edited a Newark, N. J., newspaper, published books and was a captain in the War of 1812. A son of his, Charles Henry Halsey, turned to the pulpit and became a doctor of divinity. This was the admiral's grandfather. His wife was Eliza Gracie King, whose father, Charles King, had been president of Columbia College. Her grandfather, Rufus King, was twice United States minister to Great Britain. Eliza herself, at the age of fourteen, had been chosen to deliver the address of welcome to General Lafayette when the great Frenchman landed in New York for his visit in 1824. The Reverend Doctor Halsey became rector of Christ Church in New York, but in 1855 at the age of forty-five he was killed in a 60-foot fall from his church which was undergoing repairs. He had climbed a steeple to inspect the work and fell when he reached for his hat which had been whipped off by the wind. The youngest of his six children was William F., Sr., who became a naval officer and retired with the rank of captain. He was the father of the admiral.

Captain William Frederick Halsey is recalled by his granddaughter, Mrs. Spruance, as a fine-looking,

square-shouldered, erect officer with an abundant supply of personality, a gift for easy and interesting conversation. She thinks the admiral inherited the old gentleman's appearance and charm, but probably got his determination and driving energy from his mother.

Captain Halsey was born in New York on April 11, 1853, and was appointed to the Naval Academy from Louisiana in 1869. He was graduated high in his class and went on to fulfill his obvious destiny by becoming an able and well-liked officer. He served in the various ranks and on many ships, and taught at the Academy. Retiring twice, he was called back into active service each time, the last time for the duration of World War I. He finally was separated from the service on October 14, 1919, and died June 11, 1920, at his home in Washington, D. C., leaving his widow, the former Ann Masters Brewster, and two children, William F. Halsey, Jr., a daughter, Deborah Grant Brewster Halsey, and several medals and a letter of commendation from the Navy Department.

Shortly after his graduation from the Academy as a young officer, he had married the popular and pretty Miss Brewster of Elizabeth, N. J. Her father, six feet in height and slender and straight, was austere and stern, with sharp eyes and neatly trimmed white beard. He had seen adventure, and also success. At the age of sixteen he ran away from home and worked his way before the mast to India and various points in the Orient. After several years in India, he returned to the United States and eventually became president of the

Cotton Exchange. The Brewster and the Halsey families were intimates, in Elizabeth and New York, and young Bill and Ann grew up together. They drifted imperceptibly and naturally into love and were married, as everyone expected. Both families were happy. Society pages carried pictures and long stories of the wedding. The gay young bride, however, was soon to learn the trying side of life as a Navy wife. Early in the summer of 1882 her husband was assigned to the USS *Iroquois* on the Pacific Station and she had to stay behind at home in Elizabeth to await the birth of their first child, who was born October 30, of that year, 1882, and named for his father. The then Lieutenant Halsey did not see the boy who was to cut such a swath in World War II until he was more than two years of age. The lieutenant had been in the Pacific aboard ship. His daughter was born four years after William F., Jr.

While the admiral-to-be was growing up at various naval stations, a heritage of adventure was being established by his father, the captain, including one episode that made naval history. Still a lieutenant—for promotion was slow and tedious then—William F., Sr., was aboard the USS *Baltimore* in 1894 when she was the flagship of Admiral Carpenter, commanding our squadron in the Far East. The Japanese and Chinese were at war (even then) and the *Baltimore*, along with ships from other navies—British, French, German and Italian—was anchored a short distance off Port Arthur, observing the desperate but hopeless efforts of the Chinese to stave off defeat. About twenty thousand Chinese

ere in Port Arthur, which was besieged by twenty-five thousand Japanese.

It was a cold, raw November and the Japanese were in ill humor toward the nations whose ships were standing by. They were particularly cool to the British, which was due no doubt to an incident of a few days previously. The Japanese had been trying to slip a force of warships into the harbor and surprise the Chinese from the sea side in support of an attacking army on land. They had been closing in unobserved and seemed about to accomplish their mission with complete surprise. But they had to run past the British ships and the British up and fired round after round from their saluting guns. It was all very polite, but the salutes earned the Chinese, who prepared a warm reception, and the Japanese were hissing through their teeth.

All the nations wanted to push into Port Arthur first, so as to get reports back to their capitals quickly on what had happened there—a report of the battle from both participants. On November 21st there were rumors that the Chinese had surrendered, so Admiral Carpenter hauled up his anchors and headed in fast with the *Baltimore*. As he approached shallow water, he put Lieutenant Halsey and three other young officers into a small boat and told them to get ashore on the double-quick. Then he looked closely at Port Arthur and was astonished to see the Chinese flag still flying over the fortifications. Calling for his glasses, he then saw that both the Chinese and Japanese flags were floating in the breeze. The admiral's dilemma was

great, but he didn't back down. He discovered later that the Chinese had surrendered but couldn't take down their flag, as neither could the Japanese, because its halyards had been carried away by a shell, leaving it stuck at the top of the pole.

Lieutenant Halsey and company in their fast small boat were speeding along when they noticed a Japanese officer on the docks. He was jumping up and down and waving and shouting.

"He seems greatly excited," said Halsey. "I wonder what he wants?"

"Better stop," advised one of his colleagues.

Halsey did, and then could hear the Japanese. He was shouting, "Stay where you are! Don't come any closer! Wait until I get out to you!"

"What ails him?" grumbled Halsey.

"I can't figure it out," said the other American, "but I have a feeling we'd better do what he says."

The Japanese jumped into a boat alongside the dock and raced out to them.

"Excuse me, gentlemen," he said in faultless English. Then he spied Halsey. "Ah," he said, "I'm delighted to see you, Lieutenant Halsey. I knew you at Annapolis."

He explained that the bay was full of Chinese mines with only a narrow and twisting channel thus far swept clear by the Japanese.

"I don't see how you've avoided the mines," he said. "But if you'll follow me I'll try to take you through."

He turned and the Americans fell in behind him. Their nerves were taut. Suddenly there was a bump

under their boat and an explosion. But, to their surprise, their boat was not blown up and resumed its course. Chagrined, they noticed the Oriental looking back and laughing. He explained that they had run into a buoy.

"One of the little air tanks in your boat exploded," he laughed.

The crestfallen Halsey and associates landed quietly and found Port Arthur completely wrecked and strewn with dead, mostly Chinese.

"Chinese corpses were everywhere," Halsey reported. "But the Japanese lost only a hundred and eighty men."

He couldn't understand why the Chinese had adopted the tactics which led to their defeat. They had good weapons in the forts, including the latest in German Krupp field pieces, with plenty of ammunition and supplies, enough to last for at least a year. However, they had retreated out of the forts to rifle pits in open fields, where the Japs had slaughtered them.

Approaching a Japanese officer, Halsey inquired: "How did you drive the Chinese out of the forts?"

The only answer he could get was, "Vengeance!"

Then he learned that the Chinese had caught some Japanese scouts, and cut them up and that spies had carried word of this to the Japanese, who thereupon had assaulted the forts in one bloody charge.

Halsey also was puzzled by the absence of wounded, but assumed they had been carried to dressing stations.

He asked the Japanese if American doctors should come ashore.

He was informed coolly that there were no wounded, that the Japanese had killed all the wounded, both their own and the Chinese, a foretaste of what his son was to find fifty years later: Japanese acting with the same fierceness and cruelty.

The quick trip of investigation at Port Arthur provided Lieutenant Halsey's party with a real news scoop. Their comprehensive report was in Washington before the other nations knew that the port had been captured, and there was much embarrassment that night when Berlin, London and Rome inquired, "How come, please?" of their ships off the China coast.

The Japanese officer who greeted Lieutenant Halsey in such fine English—which he had learned at the United States Naval Academy—may have been one of the many similarly experienced Orientals who helped design the modern Japanese fleet. He was an early prototype of the apocryphal individual who figured in so many stories before World War II, when our navy stopped enlisting Japanese as mess attendants, such as the one about the American cruiser skipper who was puzzling over his charts, trying a tricky bit of calculating in finding his position, only to have his boy, standing behind him with a pot of coffee, say politely, "Excuse me, sir, but you're making a slight error in longitude." The attendant turned out of course to be a Japanese naval intelligence officer.

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WHEN Lieutenant Halsey came back to his young wife in Elizabeth to get acquainted with his son, he found the two-year-old with long, blond curls and blue eyes.

"I'll take the boy for a walk," he said.

Mrs. Halsey, pleased and proud, dressed William—as she called him then and still does—in a suit and placed a cap upon his curls. She thought the boy was cute. So did her women friends. And no doubt he was.

His father hastened to the business section, with William toddling beside him, and made directly for a shop—a barber shop. The barber put a board across the arms of his chair, lifted the boy and rustled a piece of candy to help stay the tears. William, however, was a little wooden Indian while the shears snipped and his curls floated to the linoleum floor.

"That's the boy," said his father, as they ventured forth. William said nothing.

When they got home, Mrs. Halsey wept. But she soon stopped, and thereupon stated to the lieutenant

exactly how she felt about snipping the little boy's curls. Both William, Sr., and William, Jr., were silent. Mrs. Halsey, now in her eighties and living at the home of her daughter, Deborah, Mrs. Reynolds Wilson, at Wilmington, Delaware, recalls the day.

"I was so disappointed," she smiles, with cheerful understatement.

When William's sister came along, he was brought in to see her. With the wisdom of a four-year-old he said, "She's all right."

She grew up to think her brother was more than all right. In August, 1945, she was in Wilmington, where her husband is with the Dupont works, and summed it all up neatly. "Brother William is wonderful. Everybody adores him." She added that she's always called him Brother William, and never had heard her father, nor her mother, address him as anything but William. She was irritated by the nickname, "Bull," which seems to have been hung on him somewhere along the way, but which never came into common usage, either to his face or behind his back, until the correspondents resurrected it during the latter part of World War II. The admiral was Willie to his pals during his prep school days, continuing as Willie, or Pudge, at the Academy, and becoming Bill in the Navy, once he went up from his ensign's commission.

Willie wasn't an extraordinary boy in any way. He went to kindergarten in Coronado, California, an island in warm and delightful San Diego Bay, and put in his leisure time playing with shovel and bucket in the sand,



or tumbling around the beach with other Navy youngsters. He became a good swimmer as a boy and enjoyed it. During the war some of his staff discovered, when they tried to keep up with him, that he still ranked as excellent in the water.

Willie's kindergarten teacher reported his behavior all right, although somewhat on the stubborn side, and said there was nothing wrong with his mental apparatus, although his attention wandered. He was just about half way in his class—neither any better nor any worse than the average—and that's about where he stayed all through his school years.

He was on the quiet side, and still is, which likely will come as a shock to his public which seems to have taken the Bull cognomen to indicate a bellowing, roaring martinet of the quarter-deck. But he is tough, tough of fiber and tough-thinking, and he always has been. As an example—

One sunny day in Coronado he wandered home from the shining sands with a bump the size of an egg under his short curls. But he wasn't crying and he lodged no complaints. In answer to Mrs. Halsey's questions, he simply said that Jimmy had hit him over the head with a bucket. He didn't know why. He'd just hit Jimmy back, that was all, and had come on home.

From Coronado, Lieutenant Halsey started another tour of duty at sea, and Mrs. Halsey and the two children trekked across the country to visit her parents in Elizabeth. His next shore station was Vallejo, California, and Mrs. Halsey, Willie and Deborah came around

the Horn on a merchant ship from New York. The ship carried livestock, which were slaughtered on Fridays to provide fresh meat to the passengers for the coming week. One Friday, seven-year-old Willie arose early and announced he would be up watching the slaughtering. Mrs. Halsey tried to tell him that he wouldn't like what he was going to see.

"Why not?" he inquired.

"It's too brutal," she said.

Mrs. Halsey was dressing three-year-old Deborah when another passenger, a friendly woman, came into the cabin.

"I think you'd better go get Willie," said the woman.

"Why?" asked Mrs. Halsey. "What's he doing?"

"I'd rather you'd go see," said the woman. "I tried to stop him, but he wouldn't listen to me."

Mrs. Halsey rushed to the slaughtering pen. She didn't know what she expected to find—probably the boy was sick. What she found, however, was Willie wading gaily in the waterways which were running deep with blood. The men thought he was amusing. He obviously thought so himself.

The admiral still remembers what happened. "She gave me a good whaling."

At Vallejo, in from San Francisco bay, the Halseys found a house and Willie attended public grade school. The other little boys learned that Willie didn't mind being called Willie, so long as they didn't say it in that certain tone. And, reversing that old code of the West, he'd rather they didn't smile when they said it, either.

He had his way, eventually, although he had to fight through quite a line of detractors.

There was one in particular. He was much larger than Willie, who never grew very large for his age, no matter what this was. However, he was chunky and hard. He had to tackle his main obstacle several times. The lad was hard to convince, and Willie wore the scars of the convincing over a period of several weeks.

"Willie," said his mother, "who are you fighting?"

"A boy I've got to lick," said Willie.

"But why?" insisted Mrs. Halsey.

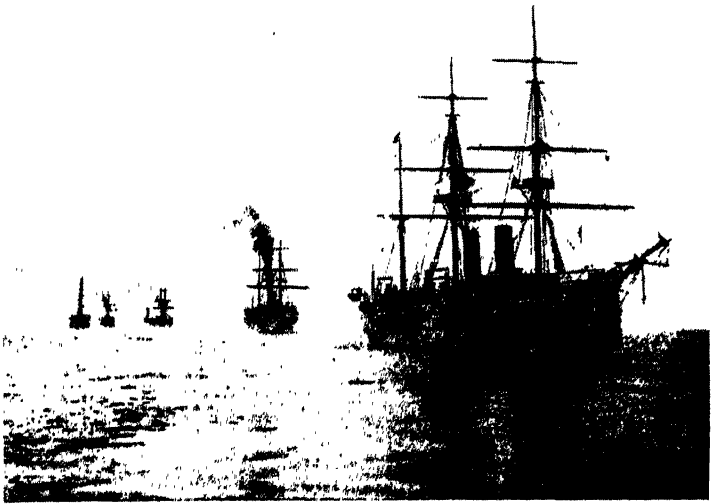
"I just have to, that's all."

"Tell me his name."

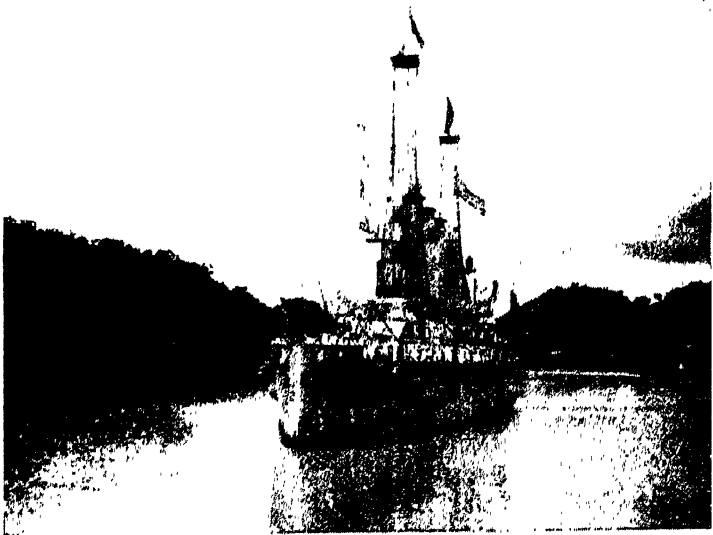
"No, I'd rather not," said Willie. "You might do something to stop him, and I want to take care of him myself." He was determined to handle the problem in his own way, a trait of character to be noted by anyone who wants to understand his later career.

His formal education, after Vallejo, was continued at the Pingry School at Elizabeth, one of the older preparatory schools in the East. When Halsey attended, the enrollment was about sixty and the facilities were complete—a gymnasium, a baseball diamond, football field, track, and plenty of classrooms and teachers.

Again Willie answered only enough questions correctly in classes to stay safe scholastically, but on the athletic field he was tops. Physically he was not impressive; he still was small and chunky, and no speedster. There were other boys who could throw a baseball farther, and run bases faster. There were others who could



The "Great White Fleet," vintage 1906-1907.



The old U.S.S. *Missouri*.



Bill Halsey at Pingry School, age 11. (*International*)

kick a football harder and beat Willie around the ends. However, even at that tender age—and in only pickup or sandlot type of football—when he hit an opponent, the opponent stayed hit, and when he hit a baseball it went someplace. Also he drew youngsters to him and held their friendships, as he is still doing, although now his friends range from the cradle to the old sailors' home.

He was forthright, too, and perfectly willing to take a chance. Pingry School had lost its goal posts. A pack of kids from Newark were coming down the next Saturday to play. Willie Halsey and company, aided by a few dark nights, produced new goal posts. They were careful not to borrow too much lumber from any one victim.

Willie really cut his athletic teeth on the sons of Newark citizens, and then continued to sharpen them on the same fare when he got into the high school division at Pingry. The big game of the year was Pingry vs. Newark High. This particular year Pingry was host. Rumors came from Newark, to the effect that the visitors were coming down headed for a win. They had taken vows, so the rumors went, and then had reinforced them with a few ringers on the team, that is, with stars who attended school elsewhere than Newark but who were being bribed in one way or another to lend their assistance to this one great licking that was to be administered to Pingry. It also was said that the ringers were tougher than Willie Halsey, and would handle him properly.

Willie's teammates took up the situation with him. What was he going to do about it?

"Nothing," said Willie.

So, Newark came to Pingry, with student body and townspeople, and with banners and pennants and expectations high.

Pingry won the toss and chose to receive. The home club's stocky little fullback, Willie Halsey, ran slowly forward at the kick-off from his place under the goal posts. The ball, turning end over end, settled into his arms. He tucked it away, picked up speed and started down the field. Newark's center, a big, powerful, clumsy boy, flung himself at Willie, who hit low with his wide shoulders, where he packed most of his meat, and the center bounced back, with an astonished look on his face. Willie bounced back, too, but went forward again, then ran to midfield before a half dozen Newark players swarmed in and downed him.

Pingry's backfield swung into position for the next play, Willie between the two halfbacks, the quarterback directly behind the center.

"How do you feel?" the quarterback inquired of Willie.

"Fine," said Willie evenly, "let's go."

The quarterback called the signals, the ball was snapped, the two halfbacks tore into the middle of the line, with Willie right behind them. The Newark center, playing high, pushed the two blockers aside, but Willie smacked him and the Newark boy went rolling, still more surprised. Willie went on for fifteen more yards.

"You knocked him flat," said the Pingry quarter to Willie.

"You can knock 'em all flat if you hit 'em hard enough," said Willie, and thereby expounded the theory that he was to carry through life. Indeed, he early learned the value of applying power at the right time and right place. No less than the British, who claim that their battles are won on the playing fields of Eton, the recent American victories in the sea lanes off Guadalcanal and the Philippines were based on the primary instruction that Admiral Halsey and those like him have acquired on gridirons such as Pingry and Annapolis.

A New York businessman, who played on that Pingry team, said that as darkness fell the score was about 70 to 30 for Pingry and that Halsey still was bowling them over, with the Newark coach screaming, "Why can't somebody stop that little guy!"

Asked if the Newark team really had rung in some strangers, the ex-Pingry man said, "No, they were just trying to scare us with those pre-game stories."

Willie left Pingry to climb on a preparatory school merry-go-round—St. John's, Swarthmore and the Naval Academy Preparatory School at Annapolis. When anyone asked him where he was going to college, he just said, "The Naval Academy."

He had set his mind on Annapolis as a small boy, which wasn't surprising considering that the Navy and its influences were all about him, but his fixity of purpose was unusual. He never wavered the slightest.



And, more important, his mother was equally determined that he should study in the hallowed halls on the banks of the Severn. This was well, for it was to take all the combined Halsey determination of mother and son, and a bit of ingenuity by the lady in addition, before the sacred gates were opened to admit him. But for Mrs. Halsey, her son probably would have been a fighting Navy doctor.

The road to Annapolis got rough when Lieutenant and Mrs. Halsey set about getting their son an appointment. His schooling had been aimed at the Academy, at considerable cost to his parents and consistent if not diligent study on his part, through the many preparatory schools. But the Halseys, like all Navy people, had moved around too much. They had no permanent domicile, had never taken root in any place long enough to work up political acquaintances or influence, and that's what it takes—unless a boy can win a competitive examination—to matriculate at either the Military or Naval Academy. They didn't know any senators. Willie's scholastic record simply was not such as to swing the door of Annapolis wide open by its impressiveness.

The proposition looked pretty hopeless. But when friends would say to the mother, "If Willie can't make Annapolis, where are you going to send him?" she'd always reply: "He's going to the Naval Academy."

"But how?"

"I don't know, but he is."

In time it was necessary for Willie to enroll some place or lose a semester.

In his deep disappointment, he had finally decided that if he couldn't get into the Navy through the front door he'd go in by another entrance—not exactly through a back door nor a side door for the metaphor would be inexact—but by way of medicine. He'd be a Navy doctor, an honorable profession in the Navy as elsewhere and a respected branch of the service which has written important chapters in the book of healing for mankind. He still wanted a line commission, but—

The Halseys, father, mother and son—and even little sister Deborah, who by this time also had become Navy-minded—wiped away their tears and debated Willie's next move. Mrs. Halsey, of course, never gave up for an instant, but Willie obviously had to be settled somewhere in school while she outlined her campaign for Annapolis.

The University of Virginia had (and has) a fine medical school. It was for other reasons desirable, too, in the estimates of the Halseys, so Willie appeared on the Virginia campus as a freshman, taking courses designed to fit him for the school of medicine. As usual he was quiet and moderately serious; also he was practically without acquaintances on the campus. Despite this, he was invited to fraternity rush parties. He was no hell-raiser nor did he aspire to be a campus big shot. But he had something. He was accepted by the youths who had come to Virginia with their own crowds from

various schools. The Delta Psi group sought him out in particular. The word was passed around, "This Halsey's a good guy." He was rushed hard. He drank beer with them and listened to them extol the virtues of good old Delta Psi. He laughed at their stories and told a few himself, in a reticent way. He could tell a story well, even then, and in time he was to become a raconteur famous throughout the Navy.

Came pledge day and Willie went to the Delta Psi house for a special lunch, and accepted a pledge pin amid the singing and hoop-de-do so dear to the American boy who is "in," who is on his way to becoming a fraternity man. He seemed a little more mature than most of his fellow pledges, and he should have, for he had seen a lot more of the world, of life and of numerous preparatory schools than most of them, but if he felt that way he kept his feelings hidden, and joined the celebrating with no apparent reservations.

Hence he suffered the indignities of "Hell Week" when the upperclassmen impressed upon the lowly pledges that only by the greatest of good fortune were they rescued from their undesirable caste and elevated to the position where, if they displayed the proper qualities, they might eventually look their fellow University of Virginia fraternity men in the eye and say, "Me, too." All the tests were survived. He listened intently to the impressive initiation ceremonies and was accepted into the clan with pleasure by the upperclassmen, and with a certain feeling of dependence by the other fledglings. He was top-flight material for a

fraternity and more than held up his end in promoting that fine spirit of comradeship which marks the best of Greek Letter organizations. As an admiral he wears the Delta Psi emblem conspicuously on his watch chain and obviously is proud of it.

Unfortunately, however, he was not quite the hit among members of the football coaching staff that he was in fraternity circles. At the opening of school he reported for the grid squad and was issued a suit, but without noticeable enthusiasm.

"What do you play?" asked an assistant coach, an alumnus serving without pay, since universities in those days did not carry the roster of coaches they do now.

"Fullback," said Willie.

"Did you say fullback?"

"Yes," said Willie, "fullback." He was not impertinent, but he was undaunted.

The coach shot a questioning eye over Willie's frame.

"How much do you weigh?" he asked.

"A hundred and fifty."

"That's not very much."

"It's enough," said Willie.

"That," said the coach, "remains to be seen."

The squad reported on the field for the first practice session. There were a number of letter-men back and they, along with several big, fast youngsters up from the second team, were ticked off for the first team. Willie Halsey had hardly expected to be tabbed for that eleven, so he stood quietly, hands on hips, waiting.

"Nelson, Garlach, Finch and Bosworth," said the

coach. He ran through some more names. They composed the second team. Willie was slightly disappointed this time. After all, he did have a pretty good rep as a preparatory school player and it wouldn't hurt them any to give him a chance. This was before the rule barring freshmen from competing on the Varsity, so he was eligible. He looked around and decided he'd make the third squad, anyway. He was sure of that. Only ten men were left.

"You," said the coach, pointing at Halsey, who looked like a football player done in miniature as he stood between two huskies, "where is it you play?"

Willie misunderstood him. "Pingry," he said.

"What?" demanded the coach. "What's that? Oh, never mind!" He turned away. "Just help out here and there."

The players went through their preliminaries, the toughening-up exercises, the bending, the squatting, the running on hands and toes, the kicking, passing, the long runs to develop the wind—all very tiresome and plain drudgery. And Willie was right in there, saying very little, just puffing and sweating.

The first game of the season, against Georgetown, approached. The first team began running off plays against the second team. The third stringers, including Willie, mostly stood by and watched. The final week of preparation for Georgetown included some scrimmage, but Willie had little part in it.

The night before the contest the coach was intent on perfecting a quick-breaking play through the line

which was designed to spring Virginia's quarterback and star into the open for a long gainer. The head man worked with the Varsity and the second squad, showing the Varsity guards and tackles how they must take out their men and open a hole for the ball carrier. Finally he thought everything was set.

"Now," he said, "everybody dig in this time and really try. Let's see if it will go when we're bearing down. All of you, Varsity and second team, tear in—get your men—put them down and keep them down! Hit hard!"

The squads lined up, but the second string fullback was limping. "Get somebody else in there," said the coach to a volunteer aide on the side lines. The aide glanced at his football remnants. He seemed undecided. "I'll go in," said Willie. "Go ahead," said the assistant coach, so Halsey trotted to his position directly behind the second string center. He was backing up the line, all 150 pounds of him. He could barely see over the broad backs of the linemen as they took their stances in front of him, each with one hand touching the ground, up on their toes, to put spring into their charge, their loose hand swinging ominously, ready to smack up into the face of an opposing lineman, or down on his neck.

"Now, look," said the coach to his quarterback as he stepped out of the way. "Make the fake good so it will really look like you've given the ball to a halfback. Then spin and get through that hole in a hurry. Straight-arm that little defensive back (Willie) if you have to, then cut away into the clear. But your inter-

ference ought to take him out. You guys," to the half-backs and fullback, "be sure and get that little guy (Willie) out of the way. Block him hard! Let's go!"

Willie shifted uneasily. They were concentrating too much attention on him. He looked down and kicked at the turf, then raised his eyes, lowered his head a little between his shoulders and stood taut, his legs slightly apart so he could swing away in either direction, depending on how the blockers came at him and which way the ball carrier cut. Oh well, he thought, they can't kill you more than once.

"Signals!" called the quarterback, and rattled off some numbers. The center slapped the ball into his middle. He faked and came tearing into the line, with two blockers pounding ahead of him. The hole opened and they were headed for Halsey. He side-stepped one blocker, smashed both hands down on the neck of the other, sending him skidding away, then looked for the ball carrier, who was not hard to find. An easy runner, with high knee-action to knock off tacklers, he was turning at top speed in front of Willie and aiming a stout straight-arm at Willie's durable chin. He hit it, too. Willie blinked, shook off the blow and ran diagonally across the field in an attempt to either get close enough to tackle the runner or chase him over the side line out of bounds. But the ball carrier was much faster than Willie. With what he obviously considered a safe lead he swung downfield for the goal line. Willie had his last chance. As the runner flashed past he launched himself into the air. He aimed well. His feet floating

behind him, he crashed into the runner, his stocky shoulder catching the quarterback between hip and knee. As they hit the turf, rolling over and over with Willie's arms wound tightly around the runner's legs, there was a crack which could be heard all over the field. Willie pulled himself to his feet, but the ball carrier stayed down. He lay on his face.

Coach and squad ran to him. They turned him over. He cried out in pain. The coach straightened one leg, which seemed strangely bent. "Go get a stretcher," he said between his teeth.

At the fraternity house that night one of the brothers said to Willie: "A great help you are to our team—break our star quarterback's leg the night before the big game! Who're you for, Virginia or Georgetown?"

"I'm sorry," said Willie. "Please don't kid me about it."

The old Virginia man who has contributed this incident to history went on to say, "Halsey was heart-broken. He'd gladly have given his own right leg to replace the one he'd cracked."

Indeed, Willie Halsey spent the rest of the year at Virginia practically in waiting on the injured athlete. Meanwhile, he found the going rugged at times in the classrooms at the University of Virginia. He plunged at mathematics, English, history, sciences and a foreign language, but they didn't come very easily.

With the arrival of the mid-year exams Willie, hoping for the best, walked into the history classroom to get a copy of the printed questions and to try his



hardest for a good grade. The line moved slowly to the prof.'s desk, but Willie finally arrived.

"Your name, please?"

"William F. Halsey, Jr."

The prof. leaned back in his chair and took a good look at Willie. "Have you been in my class?" he asked.

Willie gulped. "Yes, sir," he said weakly.

"Where have you been sitting?"

"Back there." Willie pointed out a side-armed chair at the rear of the room, under a window.

"Oh," said the prof., apparently satisfied. "Very well, here are your questions."

It was enough to unbalance a less staunch scholar and maybe sidetrack his thoughts, if any, but Willie, even at Virginia, was made of stern stuff. He dismissed the professor's unaccountable remarks for the time being, with a mental note to look into the matter later, and proceeded to grapple with the questions. He was pleased to discover that he knew quite a number of the answers. He also discovered later why the prof. didn't remember him. The venerable old intellectual couldn't see to the back of the classroom. Willie never was one to speak up until called upon, and this teacher couldn't see him to do any calling.

All in all, it had been a good semester for Willie, with a happy conclusion. He was to look back upon it many times with a real nostalgia.

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**I**N THE MEANTIME, his mother had determined her course to get him out of civilian togs and into the uniform of the Naval Academy. She would have to wangle an appointment for him from the President. There was no other way. But how to get to the President, the expansive William McKinley. That was the question. One could have walked into the White House any afternoon and have had a chat with Abraham Lincoln when he was the occupant, asking him for favors such as getting a boy into one of the academies, or saving him from a firing squad after he'd slept on guard duty. But times had changed in McKinley's day. An appointment had to be made.

Mrs. Halsey said, well, the place to start was at home, so she looked around Elizabeth and consulted with her friends and decided upon Edgar Grigg, the attorney general for New Jersey. Her acquaintance with him came through both her father, president of the Cotton Exchange, and her father-in-law, the rector of Christ's Church across the river in Manhattan. Call-

ing upon Grigg, she said, "You know the President, don't you?" He said he did, and Mrs. Halsey explained that they were going down to Washington together. Grigg was glad to be of this small service, and played his part well. Through a presidential secretary, he made an appointment for Mrs. Halsey to see Mr. McKinley after office hours so that she might present her plea without the interruptions of the business day.

Mrs. Halsey curtsied prettily in acknowledging Grigg's introduction, and she was very pretty, curtsying or not. The President had eyes with which to see and ears with which to hear. The quarry was in the bag already.

"Mr. President," said Mrs. Halsey, "I would deem it a very great favor if I could have an appointment to Annapolis for my son."

The President replied, "I see." He felt good and wanted to talk.

While Mrs. Halsey smiled, Grigg explained why William F., Jr., had to have a presidential appointment-at-large. His father was a captain in the Navy and had no permanent residence. Would Mr. McKinley please consider Mrs. Halsey's request?

"I have been praying," said Mrs. Halsey softly, looking directly at the President, "for this. I have been praying very sincerely."

"Madame," said the President, "your prayers have been answered."

In the light of history it is interesting to speculate

on what Mr. McKinley would have said could Grigg have informed him: "You have just opened the way, Mr. President, for a great naval officer, a full admiral who will some day kick the living daylight out of the bitterest enemy America has ever had."

"Tut, tut," Mr. McKinley probably would have said. "The boy doesn't sound that good to me, but he does have a gracious mother."

Willie left the University of Virginia at the end of his freshman year and went to Annapolis, where he was called both Willie and Pudge, the latter particularly, because he was a pudgy little guy. First, of course, he had to take the entrance examinations, but he approached them with poise, although with secret trepidation, as usual. After all, the Academy was nothing new to him, not to the Navy and the people who were connected with it. He'd lived at Annapolis during a period when his father was teaching seamanship.

An idea of how he impressed the boys who were to be his classmates has been given by Rear Admiral David McDougal Le Breton.

"Willie," says Le Breton, "didn't seem to be scared at the entrance exams, where we first saw him. The rest of us were, however. We were scared to death. Willie was older than most of us (he was seventeen). And he'd been to college for a year and had a better education than we had. We were high school boys. But most important, Willie knew what it was all about, from having a Navy father and having lived on the establishment.

Although he probably didn't know it, we looked up to him in many ways. We thought he was a wise sort of person."

The Naval Academy that Willie Halsey entered in the spring of 1900 was a far cry from the great organization that exists today on the Severn. There were about ninety youngsters, with an average age of around sixteen in the Freshman, or Plebe, class, and but two hundred and fifty in the entire academy. Now the enrollment exceeds three thousand five hundred, and the physical properties of the school have grown beyond any vision of forty-five years ago.

Halsey always has had a flair for keeping friends as well as making them, and one reason, of course, is because he's as loyal to his colleagues as he expects them to be to him. Thus, when he entered the Academy, his first roommate was a boy named Brad Barnette, now dead for some years. While other midshipmen switched "wives," Halsey and Barnette stayed together, until they graduated.

Admiral Le Breton says Willie studied but "didn't strain himself," which indicated another facet of the Halsey character—he was consistent. He hadn't strained himself over his books anywhere along the scholastic trail. As another person who knew him put it, Willie was not a good student at Virginia, and he was no better at Annapolis, merely parting his hair in the middle at Virginia and on the side at Annapolis.

However, when the chips were down, Willie could shine. He wasn't one to leave his fight in the gymna-

sium. He never overtrained, either for the classroom, the athletic field, or the broader and more terrible field of war. But on any occasion that he considered vital he could summon up all his sparkling energy and vitality and carry the day with a terrific assault.

When he was a Plebe at the Academy he was plagued in particular by the subject of mechanics. He was struggling along with a 2.05 average, which was barely passing, as the Academy system starts with 4.0 for perfect and then slides down to the Halseys, or a little under, except that the little unders aren't around very long. They go elsewhere to school. Willie's father, the captain, by that time was back at Annapolis on the teaching staff, and he was worried about his chubby son and his troubles with mechanics. So were Mrs. Halsey and Deborah and Willie's friends and even Willie himself.

The captain said, "You've got to get a pretty good grade in mechanics, you know that, don't you?"

"Yes, sir," said Willie.

"Well," said the captain, "why don't you do something about it?"

"I will," said Willie, and strolled away.

The captain shook his head, dolefully.

But Willie wasn't talking through his hat. He had a plan all the time. He never took reverses mildly, or backed away from danger, but always waded right in, punching with both hands, after deciding he had a chance, and also what the best procedure should be. Now he had to do something, and in a hurry, because

it was the night before the final exam. He collared two classmates who were well acquainted with mechanics, and asked them to lend a hand and bear down hard. From early in the evening until the next morning, all through the long night, Willie and his tutors were hard at it, drinking pots of coffee together while the classmates served up plain and fancy mechanics as main courses and side dishes and Willie gulped it down until mechanics was running out his ears.

When he left the examination room he knew he had triumphed, that he had met mechanics and it was his. Marks were given out that afternoon, and Willie went home.

The captain was most apprehensive. "Did you pass?" he ventured.

"Certainly," said Willie.

"What did you get?" asked the captain testily.

Willie was casual. "Oh," he said, "a 3.98."

Satisfied that Willie hadn't been drinking, the old man said: "That's fine, William, but make it 4.0 next time."

Willie's other grades were what teachers merely call "satisfactory," but there were no complaints about Willie on the gridiron, or later, in the spring, on the crew. He put up a good brand of Plebe football and pulled a consistent oar, but he suffered a great disappointment, along with all the other midshipmen, when the Army whipped their Varsity in the annual grid classic between the two service schools. Halsey, however, was just getting a taste of a routine that was to become

bitter as wormwood, for all the time he was at Annapolis, and despite his most desperate playing, he never was to see the blue of the Navy floating over the Army gray on the gridiron.

The Army, actually, took the Navy apart, Halsey or no Halsey. In 1901, Willie's first year on the Varsity, the score was 11 to 5, but the following season the Cadets made it 22 to 8. In Halsey's last year the Mid-dies were out for revenge, but when the night mercifully blotted out the scene the final score read, Army, 40, Navy, 5, and Willie dragged himself, battered and bruised, off the field, his head down, his scuffed head-guard swinging aimlessly by his side, and made his way to the dressing room to fall exhausted on a rubbing table, where a trainer massaged the knots out of his heavy shoulders and legs and tried fruitlessly to smooth the kinks out of his soul.

"You played a great game, Pudge," said the trainer. "You're a great loser."

Willie had just strength enough to force himself up on one elbow and bellow: "Who the hell wants to be a good loser? I want to win," then to fall back with a thump and cover his face and mumble, "To me it's a hell of a note."

And so it was, but not nearly so humiliating as the Saturday night in Baltimore after another game when a newsie shoved a late sports extra into his face and he read: "Even Bucknell Defeats Navy!"

Those were hard years for Willie, but he learned that pride and arrogance go before a great fall, and the



little barrel-chested fullback, who never weighed more than 150 and who played his heart out every time he trotted onto the gridiron, forever after forswore any affectations.

As the admiral he still will react to needling about his football career at Annapolis. To his family or with his cronies he will growl, "I was a damn good player on a poor team."

There was another angle to these defeats, as set forth by Admiral Le Breton, who says that the Army was getting professionals then. "Their age limit for admission was twenty-one, while ours was eighteen, meaning that West Point would take in youngsters up to the day before their twenty-second birthday, while the Naval Academy newcomers had to be no more than eighteen." This gave the Cadets a big pull in age, and so in strength and experience. By "professionals" he doesn't mean boys who had played for pay, but those who had lugged the ball around some other college gridirons before discovering that their real ambition in life was the Army career.

This disparity in admission ages finally led to the severance of athletic relations between the service schools for a time, but the competition was terrific in Willie's day. This meant heartaches, but it built genuine character. As Halsey said, years later, "I have heard a lot about the Army and Navy games engendering hatred, but it's the bunk. The finest thing is to go out there and fight like hell. It is the grandest spirit in the world."

Perhaps the most interesting detail of the whole football chapter is a curious minor event that had no meaning at the time. On a chilly November Saturday in 1902—on November 2nd, to be exact—there occurred one of those startling little coincidences which, in looking back on it, seems to have been spotlighted for all to see and take heed. In its first street edition that night, a Manhattan newspaper had a page-one play on the fiftieth birthday of the Japanese Emperor. "All the world wishes him well," said the paper over a large picture of the Jap ruler, and next to it was another one showing a group of his buck-toothed, grinning countrymen in New York, dressed in silk hats and swallow tails. They were members of the "Rising Sun Club," said the cutlines, and that night they were tossing a large shindig at Sherry's for a number of American dignitaries. The story with the pictures was full of hands-across-the-sea friendship and good will among men, but running right alongside of it was another story, about a football game, Navy vs. Penn State. The Middies lost, of course, 6-0, but in the Navy lineup was a name the gay members of the "Rising Sun Club" some day would have cause to remember—fullback, Halsey—and in the story about them was a typographical error such as occasionally creeps into even the best of newspapers.

A linotype operator had dropped a line from the football story into the Rising Sun discourse and the copy read, ". . . it was announced by Mr. Takashita but Halsey broke through and ruined the play."

Life at the Academy was not all football, or study either. There was a social side, in which Willie had had a full part as a youngster.

The Halseys at Annapolis made up a compact and friendly family group, during both the captain's tours of duty there. Captain A. C. Claude, also the son of a naval officer, has known the admiral since they romped around the Academy as boys.

"Most of the officers with children," he says "put up where the Halseys and we did, in an old apartment house on the grounds. It was called 'The Corrals,' because there always were so many babies around. It's gone now, but it was an interesting spot while it lasted."

Captain Halsey had to have company around him, and had no difficulty finding plenty of people who were delighted to warm themselves at his fireside and bask in his bright personality, precisely as his son, the admiral, holds court when he is ashore today. The Halsey apartment was noisy, but full of life, and a close family relationship was cemented so that it never would crack, except by death. Willie and Deborah set the spirited Mrs. Halsey's nerves to twanging at times, but they soon learned that if they wanted a good, uninterrupted jangle they had to repair to parts where their voices couldn't carry to their mother.

However, their second ensemble appearance at the Academy was different, for Willie was a midshipman, Deborah was fourteen, and middies were little gentlemen with nobody knowing it better or appreciating it more

than girls of fourteen who grow into young ladies under their benign and devoted influence.

Deborah, at her home in Delaware many years later, while skimming through a letter she'd just received from her own service son in the Philippines, was moved to reminiscence.

"I'm sure I must have been a sore trial to brother William when we were children. You know how younger sisters are, especially sisters four years younger. That's a bad age spread in children. I could realize after I grew older how I must have plagued him. But nobody could have been more considerate, or charming, than William when he was a midshipman. He was, and is, wonderful, and not just because he's my brother."

There were those who thought that Deborah was the wonderful one of the two children. As a matter of fact, she was immensely popular with the boys, since she was something for midshipmen to write home about. At first her mother would ask them to stay to dinner, especially on Sundays, but then the captain and his wife came to the conclusion that midshipmen were a distraction in a young lady's life, and so Deborah was sent away to school.

Halsey, Senior, taught seamanship at the Academy and a willing student was his son, who took to small boats better than most ducks to ponds. The captain was a regular square-rigger sailor and believed the way to teach boys to handle boats was by precept, that is, by showing them on board and then letting them do it.

On Saturdays and Sundays, Willie couldn't get to the floats fast enough to untie his little craft and get out on the Severn. Its white sails danced in and out among the other boats.

"He could make it do tricks, all kinds—plain and fancy," Admiral Le Breton says.

With the rest of his class, Willie Halsey took his first cruise in June, 1901, on the old sailing ship, *Chesapeake*, and had his mates standing around with their mouths open at his display of crafty seamanship. His father's training and his own predilection drew dividends on that jaunt when, in the north Atlantic, the *Chesapeake* ran into a terrific blow. Willie was of major assistance in keeping the battered windjammer from either losing her canvas or diving into the deep. He also established himself as a salt in another way, too. He wasn't seasick, and never was to suffer from this affliction which has driven many fine naval officers to the cover of permanent duty ashore. He came back from his stormy cruise on the old *Chesapeake* a real hero in the eyes of his classmates, but he took honors easily and not too seriously.

"Most anybody could have done the same," he said, which was the way he was to accept his hatful of medals and decorations later.

His interests broadened from sailing, football, rowing and class work when necessary, to include membership on what was known as the Christmas card committee, a group which chose the cards the midshipmen sent out at Yuletide. He won the confidence and respect of

his class not only as an athlete and friend, but also for his judgment and good taste. He was one of the committee which arranged for the class supper in his third year. His other committee work included the graduation ball and selection of the class crest. He even ventured into journalism, at least to the extent of serving on the staff of the *Lucky Bag*, the school annual. During his last two years he was chosen president of the athletic association and administered the association's affairs with dignity and skill, and for his crowning athletic achievement he won, in his final year, the Thompson Trophy cup as "the midshipman declared by the executive committee to have done the most during the year for the promotion of athletics."

The *Lucky Bag* remarked upon the unusual number of offices he had held, said he had "started out in life to become a doctor and gained in the process several useful hints," described him as a "real old salt who looks like a figurehead of Neptune," and a "strong sympathizer with the Y.M.C.A. movement, everybody's friend and Brad's (his roommate) devoted better half." There also was a tribute via Dickens to his understanding, to wit: "It's my opinion there's nothing 'e don't know. All the wickedness in the world is print to him."

With that Willie laid away his books, took a walk along the Severn and gave his boat to another midshipman; prowled through the gymnasium thinking over the many pastings the Navy had taken on the gridiron, and a remarkable eight-oared exhibition on the Hudson; told a couple of girls goodbye and prepared to listen to

the Secretary of the Navy tell him and his fellows how much their country depended on them—the Secretary having no idea at that time what a prophet he was, even in his own land—and then accept a commission in the United States Navy, for better or for worse, and set forth on the long road that was to take him to undying fame and glory.

On a cold February 1, 1904, their course cut short four months by Teddy Roosevelt (who then was in the White House and, with a big fleet a-building, wanted officers in a hurry to man it and go call some international bluffs before long), Halsey and his classmates were graduated from the Naval Academy and rushed to active duty. Willie was forty-second in a class of sixty-two. By rare coincidence, Halsey got duty on the USS *Missouri*. It was on the *Missouri*, of course, that he not only started his naval career but finished the war, in Tokyo bay. It was not the same *Missouri*, however, and between them for Willie lay a life-span of battle.

# 4



IT WAS at this point that the character of the future admiral began to take on its permanent set. He was thrown upon his own resources of inner spirit and initiative, now that he was out of school. In the long, monotonous watches of his duty at sea he had a real chance to think, to get acquainted with himself. It is here that a boy of lesser promise would have learned to ease away the hours in triviality, but not Halsey. The somewhat carefree Willie disappeared in a new youth. He took to study, serious and concentrated reading. Above all else, he found himself fascinated with America's naval history, and the men who made it. Starting with the American Navy when it comprised, in 1775, one proposed sailing vessel with ten guns to intercept enemy transports, he read along until he found an officer in whom he could lose himself, and a ship whose exploits could awaken his own deeper ambitions. The man was Isaac Hull and the craft was the *USS Constitution*, to become immortal as "Old Ironsides."

Halsey reconstructed Hull's career in his own mind



and heart, down to the most minute detail, absorbing the virtues and perhaps the idiosyncrasies, gradually developing into a very real reincarnation of the Revolutionary hero. Hull was a master seaman, a stout foe-man and a pat phrasemaker, all ingredients going into the Halsey make-up in undiluted profusion. There was one Hull episode which particularly delighted this young worshiper because it consisted of outfoxing the enemy first, then outfighting him and finally outtalking him.

It was action which started when Hull, in the *Constitution*, turned north from the Chesapeake with a green crew which was ripening fast under his intense training. He was sighing with relief at getting out of the Chesapeake, to his mind very much a death trap, when he saw five sails off the Jersey coast. Setting his signals—for he thought they were Americans—he waited for the reply, which never came. The ships came on, however, and speedily too, and the Yankee commander suffered a spell of palpitation of the heart when he identified them. They were British, under the flag of a Commodore Broke, and they bore down with all canvas set. He cleared for action and swung east, managing to keep just out of gunshot range of his pursuers all day. Toward night, however, the wind fell away to a whisper, whereupon Hull hoisted out boats and began to tow.

This was a game at which the British could play too, only they improved upon it. They concentrated the row boats from their five ships on their two leaders, and

with this extra power started to pull up on the *Constitution*. Hull watched the gap closing, scratched his head, came up with a new wrinkle in seamanship. Sounding, getting comparatively shallow water—or shallow enough at least to reach bottom with an anchor—he had all cable aboard rushed up on deck, attaching a light anchor to one line and dropping the hook into the frigate's cutter, which raced ahead and threw out the anchor at the full length of the line. The *Constitution's* crew then gave a heave-ho on the line and literally walked the ship forward to the anchor. Meanwhile, another anchor had been sent forward, and away went Mr. Hull and the *Constitution*. They had picked up a half mile additional lead before the British solved the mystery, adopted the same tactics, and prevented further gain.

Commodore Broke then resorted to some deep thought, and put all the boats in his squadron on his flagship, the *Shannon*, which was nearest the *Constitution*, thereupon winning back the half mile and more. His gunners were just taking aim when a breeze whipped out of the west and the *Constitution*, catching it full, cantered away, picking up her boats on the run in another dazzling display of seamanship, since the tiniest miscalculation by Hull would have meant disaster for them, as well as the men. The British, meanwhile, stopped to recover their boats, so that the *Constitution* gained back her advantage, only compelled to resort once more to towing when the wind fell off. This went on all through the night, the British sailors taking

turns at the oars, the exhausted Americans pulling and sweating without relief with their enemy taking an occasional shot but never quite getting within range.

In the morning a breath of air again filled the *Constitution's* sails, and once more she went skipping away, snatching her boats on the fly, while the British were forced to halt. This was too good to last, however, and it was boats out with the half-dead men at the oars again, and so on, for three endless days and nights. Then the British started to wear out. Hull's rugged tars got him a three-mile lead, when a slight wind caught him. Under sail again, he saw a lowering sky off to port, with rain pelting the waves. The Yankee thereupon reached into his bag of tricks and pulled out one that caught the enemy flat-footed. He sent his crew aloft and they reefed everything in closely, as though preparing for a typhoon. The British, as Hull had figured, assumed his judgment was better than theirs, as he was closer to the storm, and followed suit. Waiting just long enough to dodge behind a curtain of rain, Hull had all his canvas quickly shaken out, for he had known all along that he was heading only into a light squall, and he was gone for good before the British awoke to his deception.

If William Halsey, Jr., was delighted with Isaac Hull's display of seamanship and wits against the British, he was thrilled with what followed, for it was something he understood just as well as how to handle ships. The quiet but razor-sharp Hull put into Boston, where he found that news of his exploit had preceded him,

and that he was the man of the hour. Indeed, it was a story which subsequently was spread around the world by incredulous navy men. Pushing through the cheering throng, Hull reported for orders, which hadn't arrived, and he thereupon rushed back to the dock, worked his crew through the night for a twelve-hour record of taking on stores and ammunition, and fled with the dawn to the open Atlantic.

He had feared that a cautious Navy secretary would order him to stay in port, and away from the powerful British lion which, with its tail twisted, would soon be roaring for vengeance on the immature and undernourished American Navy. This was a fear which would have been fulfilled had he not taken his hurried departure, for the restrictive orders were en route from Washington. However, as he well knew, he was engaging in an act of downright insubordination for which he might look forward, at best, to a court-martial, and to a firing squad if his luck took a turn for the worse. He immediately invited a very bad turn by swinging north and sailing directly for the entrance to the lion's den, the powerful naval base at Halifax. His action was one of the bravest as well as most foolhardy in naval history, for the odds against him were not only overwhelming but prohibitive, at least two hundred to one, figuring on the basis of past performance over at least two decades during which the enemy had fought more than two hundred actions both singly and in fleets without dropping a decision. They were supreme on the seven seas.

Either Hull didn't know the facts or didn't believe their inevitability, for when he sighted an enemy frigate on a late afternoon he cleared for action and bore down, with the weight of the entire American Navy on his stocky shoulders, and despite the likelihood that the Britisher was part of a squadron, because the Halifax ships were known to be traveling that way. The enemy vessel was the *Guerriere*, with Captain Dacres in command, and in all the British fleet no more hated ship or skipper could be found. For three years the *Guerriere* had blockaded New York while Dacres had sent ashore insulting messages, such as, "I will be very happy to meet any American frigate for a few minutes' tête à tête," or with an offer to bet his hat he could whip any Yankee ship in fifteen minutes.

From his quarterdeck, Dacres examined the onrushing *Constitution* and remarked to a captured American merchant captain, "He comes down rather too boldly for an American."

But Hull kept coming, even after Dacres opened fire. The *Guerriere* drove in, her shot whistling through the *Constitution's* rigging, but the Yankee stepped aside.

"Shall we open fire?" asked one of Hull's anxious officers.

"Not yet, not yet," he said.

Again the *Guerriere* came in, with all guns going now, but still Hull said, "Not yet."

Then a long swell brought the two ships almost together. It was the position Hull had been seeking.

"Now!" he cried to his gunners. "Now, boys! Pour it into them!"

The thunderous broadside hit the *Guerriere* full on and the Britisher staggered.

"Again!" cried Hull. He leaped into the air, splitting his tight-fitting trousers from waist to knee.

The *Guerriere* was soon splintered and sinking under the murderous American onslaught. Captain Dacres hauled down his flag and came over to the *Constitution* in a small boat. His stern face like frozen granite, the bitter Britisher offered his sword to Hull, who had whipped him in even combat to administer England her first naval defeat in a generation.

But the American waved the sword aside. "No," he said, "I'll not take a sword from one who knows so well how to use it; but—" he smiled and held out his hand—"I will trouble you for your hat."

Consummate seaman that he was, young William Halsey thrilled to this account of his countryman outwitting his pursuers, but what most caught his interest was Hull's recovery of his boats while at full sail, a practice which was developed in modern form more than a century later for our Navy planes on special sleds after this same William Halsey had taken up aviation for himself. It was a practice which remained a top American naval secret for a decade before, and during, World War II. All navies produced the catapult, in one form or another, at about the same time. This is a device built into battleships and cruisers, which have no flight decks like carriers, and it is to

enable them to launch planes into the air for scouting, observation and spotting for the big guns, and also for fighting, too, if occasion demands. They are equipped with floats, or air cylinders, under the wings, so they can land on the water to be picked up—or recovered, as the Navy calls it—and returned to their catapults.

It's one thing to get these flying boats into the air, but it's something quite different to recover them, and that's where the United States excelled. Ships of other navies would come to a stop while a crane was swung over the side, permitting the observer in the rear seat of the plane in the water to hook onto a cable so that his craft could be pulled up on deck. That was fine in maneuvers, but in danger zones in war the cruisers and battleships wouldn't dare come to a halt—which would make them sitting ducks for attacking submarines or bombers—with the result that often they would simply abandon the floating planes and the men in them. The Americans, in the tradition of Isaac Hull, always recovered their planes on the run, to the great perplexity of other navies. How was it done? Simply enough! A sled made of heavy rope netting, and attached to one end of a line, would be dropped into the water. The pilot then would land his plane behind the sled and taxi swiftly onto it, whereupon the line was reeled in until the sled with the plane was in position for the observer to grab the cable hook enabling the mother ship to pull its plane aboard.

Young William Halsey had been aboard the old *Missouri* but three months when he was involved in his

first experience with tragedy at sea. Along with several other ships of the line, the *Missouri* was ordered to the firing range. Steaming up and down the area set aside for target practice, her guns were registering well.

The Americans then excelled in gunnery, as they do now, and the floating canvas targets were riddled toward the end of the drill. But just when the ship was sticking out its chest, so to speak, to receive the plaudits of the multitude, a terrific explosion, caused by a spark, blew one of its turrets apart.

A turret explosion is the peacetime horror of the Navy, and happens occasionally despite all the precautions taken in connection with the big rifles. The *Missouri* quivered with the blast and everyone aboard knew there was little if any hope for the personnel caught inside the turret. They had no chance at all to escape from searing sheets of flame flashing through the small, locked steel enclosure. When the turret had cooled enough to be pried open, it gave up its grim toll—five officers and twenty-eight men, all dead, their bodies charred. The ship was rushed to port and the Navy's undertakers came aboard, to be placed under the supervision of young Halsey. When this grisly business was finished he said he was thankful for the pre-medical year he had spent at the University of Virginia, since it had enabled him to meet the shock of the bodies better than many Academy graduates.

The explosion occurred on Friday, May 13, 1904, and since then Halsey has stepped lightly throughout the 13th of each month. When the date falls on a Fri-



day, he practically crawls into a hole and pulls everything in after him. It is one of his few superstitions, and it shows that he has never ceased to be human, nay, tender-hearted to an extraordinary degree. In battle, even at the end, he would never rest until his flyers had returned from their strikes. Pacing nervously about his cabin, the flag plot or his bridge, he would demand constant information.

"Where are they now?" he would ask, or worry about their fuel, about whether they had plenty of gasoline to get back to their carriers, or fret about the weather. Indeed, he'd hang onto every word, breathless, when radio conversations between planes in battle would carry to his bridge. That is, he'd listen until he could stand it no longer. Then he'd walk away, cursing the Japanese, their ancestors, their flyers, the day each and every one was born. As soon as his nerves would ease out of the tight knots, he'd be right back. "What're they saying? Who went down?" If it was an American telling of a pal in trouble, his face would set, and he'd go look over the sea toward the scene of conflict on the horizon where American boys were dying. But if the radio told of the enemy falling before his sharpshooters in the sky, which it usually did, he would beam. "Wonderful! Great!"

When his carrier was taking back her planes, Halsey always spotted himself on his bridge and watched intently as the craft circled around and around and then made their runs for a landing, and then dropped upon the flight deck. He'd count them carefully as they came

in, add what he could see in the sky. If the tally failed to balance with the number taking off, he'd pace the deck and peer anxiously in every direction. "God damn it," he'd murmur.

Upon occasions his aviators would crash-land because of damage to their planes, or bounce and flip around and smash things up because they were wounded or suffering from battle nerves. He would give them all the body English he could, leaning far to one side or the other, to pull them in safely by the power of suggestion. "Get him out! Hurry up!" he'd mutter as crews on the flight deck worked to extricate a pilot from a wrecked or burning plane.

His first concern after a battle was for his wounded. On his flagship, he'd go through the sick bay, talking with each man. "How are you, son?" he'd enquire. For the badly wounded he'd have quiet words of consolation and gratitude; for the less seriously hurt, a broad smile and a bluff comment: "Good work, lad. Thank you." He never allowed these tours to be publicized with pictures.

The big Navy base hospitals in the Pacific had first call on his time, too. Whenever he'd pull into Guam, the Third Fleet's wounded would receive a call from the admiral as soon as he'd get ashore; the same at Pearl Harbor; where three Navy hospitals cared for the officers and bluejackets who were burned or torn or fell ill in the bitter fighting far out to the westward. On top of the hill behind Pearl Harbor was one hospital that could—and most of the time did—accommodate

ten thousand patients. In addition, there were quonset hut compounds with thousands of beds, known as Base Hospitals 128 and 8. The huts were comfortable. Patients had the finest medical equipment, skill and care in these hospitals that the United States could provide.

On one of his stops at Hawaii, the admiral spent nearly an entire day in the hospitals. An aide suggested to him twice that other important duties called for his attention, since he was shoving off the next morning for the combat zones. "There's nothing so important as this," he said. "These men have done their best. The least we can do is show them we appreciate it. Anyway, I like to talk to them."

In the hilltop hospital he stopped at a bed in a surgical ward. The card at the foot of the bed told the occupant's name and rank. "Hello, lieutenant," he said.

The patient was a junior grade lieutenant, a husky, blond youngster with a wide, engaging smile. "How do you do, sir," he replied.

Halsey stuck out his hand. The boy twisted a little awkwardly and took the grasp with his left hand. His right hand and arm were gone, at the elbow. With a few more words, Halsey started on down the line of white beds. But he turned back.

"Tell me about it," he said.

The lieutenant told his story quietly; no heroics, no play for pity nor sympathy. But it was a story of heroism and sacrifice; a story that could have been repeated, however, in all its major aspects by most of the thousands of men in all the Navy hospitals every-

where, and by the thousands of Navy dead, had their tongues not been stilled. He was a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and had been a good athlete in his undergraduate days, concluded just in time for him to get into the Navy for the last year of the war. On a small craft he had gone into Iwo Jima two days before the first Marines landed, to furnish protection for an underwater demolition team. The underwater squads, among the real unsung heroes of the war incidentally, were to remove obstacles along the shore line which might hold up the landing boats. Their ships carried them as close to the shore as possible, then put them over the side. After that they were strictly on their own, swimming into the breakers, cutting loose mines, blowing up pilings and stakes which would tear the bottoms out of the Marines' boats. They were powerful swimmers but made excellent targets for Japanese sharpshooters and mortar fire as they worked close to the beach. To occupy the enemy, the protecting craft, such as the lieutenant rode, zipped along the beach, letting loose their full firepower—which unfortunately wasn't very much—at the Japanese gun emplacements which dotted the black volcanic ash of Iwo.

Both the underwater teams and the accompanying gunboats were expendable, and the Japanese, on what was to become bloody Iwo, were set for them, hence our losses were heavy. The lieutenant's boat barely had got within range of the beach, when the Japs opened on it with a battery. They had the area plotted exactly. In rapid succession four shells zinged into the boat, rak-

ing her from bow to stern, spaced nicely all along her hull close to the water line. In a matter of seconds the boat was torn to pieces, blazing, sinking. Her decks were a screaming horror of dead and dying Americans. Only ten per cent of her officers and men were rescued, and most of these were wounded.

"Oh, well," said the lieutenant with a smile. "I'm awfully lucky to be alive."

"That's right, I guess," said Halsey. "You'll soon be out of here and on your way home. You'll be all right."

"Sure," said the lieutenant, "I was going to play a little pro football for a while after I got out of service—I had a couple of offers—but that's out. I'm supposed to be a good passer, but I'm right-handed." He moved the stump of his right arm. "But I'll get into something."

"I'm sure you will," said the admiral, and moved away. To those who accompanied him he said softly: "These men—they make me feel so damned inadequate."

# 5

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**A**FTER twenty-two months aboard the *Missouri*, young William Halsey was transferred to the *Don Juan de Austria*, formerly in the service of Spain, and sixty days thereafter he received an ensign's commission, since he had completed two years of active service, a requisite at that time for midshipmen who coveted an ensign's single band of sleeve gold.

Ensign Halsey thought pretty well of himself, as what ensign doesn't? It was not long after this that he met his future wife. She was Miss Frances Cooke Grandy, as spirited and lovely a blue-eyed, flaxen-haired rebel as ever set northern hearts to beating down Norfolk way. She had been reared in a picturesque home with white columns and among the delicate, rose-petaled perfumes of the ladies and the stouter mint-juleped aromas of the gentlemen of old Virginia, the cradle of presidents and the bower in which the finest of Southern aristocracy flowered. The occasion was a reception for the officers from the ships and, though the Grandys, suh, could think of a thousand ways more

pleasant to spend their time than in entertaining Yankees, still there were Southern men on those gun-studded vessels, too, and as there seemed no convenient way to separate the wheat from the chaff—

“Miss Grandy,” asked a lieutenant, “may I present Ensign Halsey?”

Miss Grandy merely nodded her pretty head.

Then started a routine that was to be repeated so many times in years to come—with different locales and different casts, but with the same results, a social victory for William, except that in this case his very heart was at stake. Carrying on almost a monologue at first, he quietly mentioned schools, sports, cities, professions, anything that promised a glimmer of response from Miss Grandy, and the young lady soon found herself listening with interest, answering finally with eagerness.

There are differing reports on the course of the Halsey courtship of the popular Miss Grandy, including that of Mrs. Spruance of Delaware, who says balderdash to the account here favored. Although she has known both the principals for a long time—naturally enough, as she is their daughter—her acquaintance with them did not start until quite some years after the period now under discussion. A more contemporary narrative picks up at the Grandy home the very next day after the reception, Ensign Halsey being more impetuous than Miss Grandy had bargained for. Because the Grandys were bred in the tradition of hospitality, the ensign was shown in and allowed to spend a formal and at times uncomfortable hour or so. Only a much

denser youth than Halsey would have failed to notice that his accent, although a blend of the best naval stations from coast to coast, fell harshly on these finely attuned Grandy ears. However, by never raising his voice and by employing all the parlor lore of the Academy, he managed to come off with a resounding victory—he could go walking with Miss Grandy through the park the following afternoon, although not for long—just a short walk.

He made slow but steady progress thereafter, although set back a time or two, first by an aunt and then by the young belle's uncle.

"A naval offasah?" the aunt inquired upon their first meeting.

"Yes, ma'am," said Halsey, trying desperately for a bit of Beale Street inflection.

This only confused auntie, conjuring up doubts as to his nationality. "In the United States Navy?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Halsey, this time in pure New Jerseyese.

"A Yan—!" exclaimed auntie. She couldn't finish.

Uncle was equally astounded, and in seeking to pour oil on the fire brought up a matter of history which put Ensign Halsey on very sharp dilemma points. "You, no doubt, recall an engagement between two men-o'-war, namely the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*?"

Well, he didn't exactly remember the fracas, admitted William, swallowing his tongue, but he'd heard something about it somewhere. Somebody had mentioned it, sort of casually, of course.



Uncle was not to be pacified. As he developed his theme it became clear to the young caller that what was sticking in this particular Grandy's craw was another uncle, one who had been an officer on the *Merrimac* when the Confederate ironclad had tried to clip the Yankee *Monitor*—figuring the strange contraption to be but a minor hurdle in a path already strewn with blasted Northern ships—only to be neutralized completely, to the amazement of everyone, and defeating the high Confederate hopes for breaking the blockade.

"You know where that battle took place?" inquired uncle.

Yes, Halsey had to admit he did. It was only a short trot behind an old gray mare from where he was standing.

"And only forty-eight years ago," concluded the Grandy scion, as though surely nothing more need be said to cause any Yankee naval officer to shrivel up and blow away.

William was stubborn. He apologized for any blame that might be attached to him for the debacle of the *Merrimac*, and turned resolutely to the business at hand, the winning of Frances Cooke Grandy, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lewis Grandy, of a family resident in Norfolk long before the Civil War, wealthy, prominent—

In addition to his natural charm, the ensign had the agility and sense of rhythm, which he had used so well on the gridiron, to develop into a good dancer. As Miss Grandy loved to dance, he became an eager student of

the fashionable steps of that period, declining to take a back seat to any of Norfolk's younger set when the quadrilles and two-steps continued unabated until the early hours of the morning.

The impossible was happening in the Grandy household; the ensign was winning his way into all their affections, and they even invited him to accompany them on a trip to Gettysburg, which turned out to be a test for the battleship swain. As the Grandy carriage was driven along Confederate Avenue, there was much exclaiming over the monuments which marked the places where Grandys had fallen or the sites where their regiments had distinguished themselves in the engagement which had turned the tide of the War between the States. And when the carriage was passing through the territory where the Union lines had held so firmly against the gallant Southern assaults, Halsey kept a careful tongue in his head and only whispered into Miss Grandy's ear when he came to tablets which had been set in the hallowed Pennsylvania soil to commemorate the exploits of some earlier Halseys.

A month later he had an excuse to press for her answer, in the tradition precious to servicemen since warriors first came upon the earth. American ships, including Halsey's, were ordered away. It would be a long cruise, around the world—there might even be danger, who could tell?

Did Miss Grandy share his tender emotions?

Well, yes, she did.

Excellent! Now was the time to be married.

Oh, there would be time.

But there wouldn't; for he'd be gone two whole, long, dismal years, and he wanted to carry with him in his heart and his wallet the picture of a bride, his bride, his very own, to cheer him when he was blue and to bolster his spirits in storms and privations.

But she'd rather wait, and so, in 1908, Ensign Halsey, still a bachelor, set off for the long cruise, due eventually to come to the island empire of Japan, in cherry blossom season. He was stationed on the battleship *Kansas*, in Admiral "Fighting Bob" Evans' fleet, under the command of Admiral Charles S. Sperry.

Although this American force, known as The Great White Fleet because of the snowy purity of its paint, had been ordered around the world by President Theodore Roosevelt to impress several impulsive nations, its mission essentially was peaceful. In Japan, however, the Americans faced a particular situation which Halsey and his superiors met straight on, to the astonishment of the Japanese. Here was the first sprouting of seeds sown about as long before this moment as the final harvesting of events—in which William was to play a role of which he never could have dreamed—and now he was acquiring another history lesson of real importance in his own growth from the callow ensign to the indomitable admiral. In company with all the American officers, as special emissaries of Big Stick and soft-speaking persuasion, the young man lived again the episode in which Commodore Matthew Perry, USN, had looked the Japanese shogunate right in the eye and

said, "Open up, in the name of civilization and trade."

Perry's job had been worked out for him by Congress, under pressure from American businessmen, because the best waters for our whalers lay off the coast of Japan, and the people of that country took our seamen, when they were cast upon the Japanese shores by storm or current—which was entirely too often—and treated them with unceremonious savagery. Perry was to persuade the Japanese to conform to the ways of the self-designated civilized nations, or to accomplish what previous expeditions by the Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese, English, French and Russians had been quite unable to do.

After careful study, Perry had decided that his predecessors had failed because they had not understood the country and its customs. He realized the Japanese of that day lived under a strong caste system, accompanied by elaborate formalities and showy diplomacy—perhaps covering an inferiority complex—and that they might show qualities of fairmindedness if they could be approached with the right formula. He had taken two years to prepare his expedition, concentrating on a select personnel without the dolts or hot-heads who might ruin negotiations which he knew would be delicate and ticklish. He had sailed with four warships, equipped with plenty of big guns to talk in any show-down, and carrying tons of manufactured products to pique the curiosity of these Orientals. Moreover, he had carried a letter from President Fillmore in his pocket. At length, he had found himself anchored in Yeddo

(Tokyo) Bay, and watching coolly as swarms of picket boats dashed out. Their occupants, including one dark-skinned, bow-legged mite who spoke Dutch, had told him to be off at once, that is, to clear out without delay.

"No can do," an American officer had said politely—at least this was the tenor of events as reconstructed a half-century later in the ward rooms of the Great White Fleet.

The Dutch-speaking Oriental had asked to see the commodore, and Perry had sent one of his warrant officers out with the reply.

"The American Lord of the Forbidden Interior is of such exalted rank that it would be unthinkable for him to exchange words with a mere boatman."

If the Japanese wanted caste, Perry had prepared to furnish it, rich enough in quality for them to wallow in it if necessary.

"We have the vice-governor of Uraga with us. He ranks exceedingly high."

"Vice-governor? Where is the governor?"

"He is forbidden, by our customs, to board ships. Will your honorable Lord of the Forbidden Interior appoint an officer of such lowly rank that he might speak with our vice-governor?"

Perry had chosen a junior lieutenant, who had been well coached. He had held up his hand imperiously, stopping the vice-governor cold, the first moment of contact. "Our Lord of the Forbidden Interior has a communication from the Emperor of America to the

Emperor of Japan, and it must be delivered in person."

"Tut, tut," the vice-governor had said in effect, drawing himself up in his sartorial array, "who do you think you are? To the Emperor in person! Indeed! Send it through the Dutch agency at Nagasaki." This had been in reference to the fact that the Dutch were allowed one boat a year in the island, for limited trade and communication, and to carry away shipwrecked foreign seamen, if they still were alive.

"Tut, tut, yourself, and don't gimme any more of your lip," the lieutenant had answered. "The Dutch are mere merchants. We would not even dare carry such a suggestion to our exalted Lord of the Forbidden Interior. We must have dignity in this matter, and plenty of it."

"Well," had said the old wizened vice-governor, looking for all the world like the Jack of Trumps, "give me the letter."

"Indeed! What a droll idea. Now listen, and get this straight! Our Lord of the Forbidden Interior is going to hand this letter to the Japanese Emperor and it will be defiled by no other hands meanwhile. Be on your way!"

The vice-governor had been impressed, concluding that these were men who knew what rank was all about, the first of the light-skinned barbarians to come to Japan with a proper conception of the fitness of things. The next morning, something splendid in barges had pulled along Perry's flagship. Gilded like the noon-day

sun, it had disgorged the Governor of Uraga, who inquired if he might have a word with the Lord of the Forbidden Interior.

"Certainly not," he had been informed. "What a nerve!"

He wouldn't even be allowed to enter the cabin of the Lord of the Forbidden Interior; on second thought, he couldn't walk on the same deck.

Well, then, whom could he see?

After considerable consultation, and as a great concession, a captain named Buchanan had appeared, but the captain and the governor got nowhere and the Japanese finally said there simply was no other way: the letter had to go via the Dutch at Nagasaki, and would the captain please tell his exalted Lord?

"Just a minute," Buchanan had said, leaving but reappearing shortly. "Our Most Exalted Lord of the Forbidden Interior will deliver the letter in person, because such was the order from his government. If necessary, he will land with men under arms, and fight his way to his goal. He will carry the dispatch through, or die in the attempt!"

The governor had nodded vigorously in appreciation of this spirit, positively Bushido in all its aspects! But he also had quickly turned coy. He didn't believe there was a letter; it must be shown to him.

Buchanan had waved all other persons from his cabin, so that the atmosphere would be completely uncontaminated, and with great reverence had produced a rosewood box with gold inlay and elaborate carvings.

“In there is the letter, but naturally the receptacle in which reposes such a sacred document cannot be opened here.”

The governor had asked for three days grace, which was granted, and he had been punctual, returning right on the dot. A very exalted personage was being sent from the Imperial court to receive the letter, and a special house would be constructed at Nagasaki in which the exchange would take place.

Perry had sent word from his cabin; no, not at Nagasaki, but right here at Yeddo.

The argument had lasted throughout the day, each side trying to make the other lose face—that mysterious all-important consideration of the Far East—and the end had been a draw, Perry admitting the Emperor might be considered too exalted to approach in person, the Japanese agreeing that the Lord of the Forbidden Interior should by no means be forced to deal with the low-caste Dutch at Nagasaki. Upon this, the governor had produced an agreement, already signed by the Imperial Government, that the letter would be received by Prince Toda of Idzu, Hereditary First Counselor of the throne, third ranking man in Japan. Parades and banquets had followed on the beach, and Perry had passed over his precious letter, promising to return in six months for the answer.

At the appointed time he had returned, three weeks of wrangling proving to be necessary to settle precedence, a place of meeting, the make-up of commissions and finally details of the treaty itself by which



part of the Japanese Empire was opened to commerce.

Just as soon as the document had been signed, the Orientals had abandoned their restraint, and there had been feasts, entertainments on a grand scale, magnificent gifts and a final great banquet on the deck of Perry's flagship, with its conclusion when the Japanese high commissioner threw his arms around the neck of an American captain and cried, "Nippon and America, all same heart!"

After Perry had thus let the light into the dark islands, the reactions were violent and complicated, but confined within the Empire until a succession of incidents led up to the visit by Ensign Halsey and his fellow Americans in 1908. The beginning was in 1863, when the American mail steamer *Pembroke*, on her way as was her custom through Shimoneseki Strait, found the hitherto calm beaches now well fortified, and was surprised to become target for cannon balls from the forts. The skipper then noticed two or three armed Japanese steamers, apparently chasing him, and made out that they belonged to the Choshu clan and were flying signals, "Death to all foreign devils." When the captain of the sloop of war *Wyoming*, snooping around Japan on a hunt for the South's fierce blockade runner, the *Alabama*, a hearty named McDougal, heard the *Pembroke* being chased and fired upon, he rose in immediate wrath against the Japanese, forgetting the Confederates for the moment.

"We'll teach those fellows some manners," he said, roaring through the strait without charts, and back

again, sinking two Choshu ships and dusting off the shore batteries until the gunners hurried for the hills.

The Japanese dismissed this without comment as but an incident—as they did the experience of the Japanese cruiser *Naniwa* in Hawaii in the '90s when Americans forced her to give up an escaped Jap prisoner, and as they did a treaty, provoked by the great coolie immigration to the United States, which provided that neither Japan nor the United States would grant passports to laborers. But they began screaming at Uncle Sam when the first Roosevelt, looking mean and issuing orders to a big American fleet, insisted that the Japanese lay off the Russians, whom they were knocking around, and conclude the Russo-Japanese war with far less than Nippon had hoped to gain. There were riots in Japan, in which American stores were smashed and looted. Then the sovereign state of California promulgated a school board edict that Japanese children in San Francisco, although there were only ninety-three, could not attend schools with white children, but only institutions with Chinese and Koreans.

The newspaper *Mainichi Shimbun* saw red. "Stand up, Japanese nation! Our countrymen have been humiliated on the other side of the Pacific. Our poor boys and girls have been expelled from the public schools by the rascals of the United States, cruel and merciless like demons. At this time we should be ready to give a blow to the United States. Yes, we should be ready to strike the devil's head with the iron hammer for the sake of civilization."

The American press was no less excited and Roosevelt told California to pull in its horns. California replied by passing some more insulting measures, and the Japanese envoy in Washington snarled at the redoubtable Teddy who, although mad at the Golden State, proposed to take no back talk from the Island Empire and promptly ordered "Fighting Bob" Evans to the Pacific with sixteen battleships, to counter the Jap fleet rendezvous in the Bonins. The odds were better than even in all the European capitals that the Americans and Japanese would be at each other's throats in a matter of months.

Right at this juncture, *McClure's Magazine* came storming into the red-hot controversy with a piece that stunned the country. McClure's said that if "Fighting Bob's" ships ever got into battle they'd be just so much cannon fodder for an enemy, that they couldn't get out of their own tracks and that they'd shoot themselves more likely than the foe. In short, the magazine said our fleet was simply too awful for words.

"Well, how about this, admirals?" Roosevelt inquired.

The admirals said, "Eyewash," and went out to show the President, shooting at an old condemned schooner all afternoon without much effect. "The conditions weren't right," they explained.

"Try it again, under any conditions you like," said Teddy.

They did, chalking up thirteen per cent hits whereas the British, under similar conditions, were scoring be-

tween eighty and ninety. The President then called in a young officer, a commander, who had started the row by furnishing the magazine with its information, and told him to teach the fleet to shoot. He was William Snowden Sims, who proceeded to put the ships through their paces until they could shoot the ears off a squirrel, and it was only a year or so after this that Ensign Halsey joined the fleet, and found himself in Japan on a friendly visit. The entire Japanese Navy welcomed the American ships in Yokohama harbor, gunners standing stiffly at attention as salutes were exchanged.

However, the Japanese were in a jolly mood. An emissary appeared aboard the American flagship. He had come, he said, from Admiral Togo, who just then was the idol of Japan, whose flag-draped picture could be seen in any shop window. This was the commander who had trapped the Russian fleet and disposed of it almost without a trace. Togo, said the emissary, would consider it, oh, so much of an honor if the great American admiral, and such of his officers as he might select, would be his guests aboard his flagship, the *Mikasa*, for a small, but he hoped, tasty dinner.

The Americans and Japanese were seated around Togo's expansive board with much formality, and fell to with enthusiasm. At first the conversation was desultory and ragged, due no doubt to the fact that few of the Japanese could speak English, and vice versa, and that there was little in common as subjects for discussion. A few jugs of rice wine, however, overcame most of the linguistic difficulties, and toward the end

of the banquet the conversation was fairly electric, with great peals of laughter, although for the life of him, Ensign Halsey could not see anything funny in the cracks from the English-speaking Japs. His own quips, however, were tremendous.

Then came the toasts; to the President, to the Emperor; the American commander, to Togo; to the United States, to Japan; to love, to friendship; to New York, to Tokyo; to anything, and the young Japanese were struck with a brilliant idea. They'd banzai Admiral Sperry, a real compliment in their book. No more thought of than done. Scrambling to their feet, they made their way to Sperry and laid hold of him, stretching him horizontally by feet and shoulders. "Banzai!" they shouted and propelled him a foot or two into the air, catching him carefully and setting him back on his feet.

"Thank you," said Sperry modestly.

"Why, that's wonderful," said Ensign Halsey, "a remarkable custom. Let's banzai Togo, the old son-of—"

"Shh!" cautioned a pal. "Remember where you are."

"Oh, sure, don't worry about me," said Halsey, and romped, with other young Yanks, to return the compliment. Little Togo, toothy grin and all, disappeared in a huddle of big Americans. "Now," said Halsey to his compatriots, "give the nice admiral a really good one," and up went Togo. "Banzai!" shouted the Halsey gang. It is to be feared that Togo's spike-hair made contact

with the ceiling, but perhaps the whole story is apocryphal.

Serious business in Japanese waters was to come some thirty-five years later. Meanwhile Ensign Halsey returned from the long cruise and immediately set about reminding Miss Grandy, of Norfolk, that he planned to lead her to the altar, a proposition to which her reply was that his application was still on file and was being very carefully considered. On February 2, 1909, he was promoted to lieutenant, both grades. Two months later he was transferred to the Reserve Torpedo Flotilla at Charleston, S. C., where after completing instruction in torpedoes, he was assigned to duty in command of the USS *Dupont*, a torpedo boat.

In December of that year, 1909, the lieutenant said, "Miss Grandy, do you realize you are being offered the heart and hand of a skipper in the United States fleet? How can you afford to delay?"

Miss Grandy laughed. "Well, now that you make it sound so attractive, I suppose I would be foolish to procrastinate any longer."

They were married therefore, December 1, 1909, at Christ Church in Norfolk, in a simple but impressive ceremony attended by the families, girl friends of the bride from private schools in Norfolk and Oldfields near Baltimore—both of which she had attended—and fellow officers of the groom. Oscar C. Badger, a classmate, was best man, and Halsey later returned this favor at Badger's wedding. After a short honeymoon, the new

Mrs. Halsey took up the rootless and almost homeless life of the Navy, while her husband went on to command destroyers, torpedo flotillas, and to serve as an executive officer at the Naval Academy for two years, from 1915 to 1917, during which time he was promoted to lieutenant commander.

# 6



**I**T WAS quite a transition for William F. Halsey, Jr., to find himself back at the Naval Academy, not as a student but as a duty officer, charged with enforcing regulations and restrictions. He believed in discipline, but mixed with common sense, knowing it something necessary in the armed services, but with its only purpose to win wars, not to grind down the human spirit under a weight of regulations.

For example, there was a new boy who chewed tobacco, which with smoking was against the rules, although the midshipmen can smoke now. This Plebe was a sturdy character from Louisiana, with a stomach that must have been lined with asbestos and sheet iron, for he always had a big plug of very black tobacco handy by his cot. This was for enjoyment before putting away a breakfast consisting of a trans-Atlantic liner's menu from orange juice to delicately brewed coffee, with plenty of cereals and pitchers of thick cream, and ham and eggs and hot cakes, and biscuits and everything else a future admiral might desire.



After a few mornings, Halsey—then a two-striper, which is Navyese for lieutenant—inspected the yearlings as they tumbled out of their cots and into line with the brisk autumn dawning. The boys stood straight and true as he strolled along, glancing quickly at each one. He flashed a look at the chewer and passed on. Then he did a movie double-take and came back.

Gazing intently at the boy, he asked, "Are you chewing tobacco?"

The youngster never moved his head so much as a flicker, but there was a bulge in his jaw muscles, a gulp and something slid down his throat. "No, sir."

Halsey gazed at him an instant longer. Something like admiration stole into his eyes. "Very well," he said. "I thought you were," and moved off down the line.

The tableau was repeated for several mornings thereafter and the boy's health suffered under the strain. He wasn't eating regularly—that is, he wasn't able to take any interest in food for hours after each Halsey inspection, and showed it.

"Marvelous, in a way," Halsey remarked to the officer with him. "The boy must have been weaned on the stuff."

Eventually, however, the uneven struggle ended. Pale and wan, the midshipman looked Halsey straight in the eye one morning.

"I see you're not," said the lieutenant.

"No, sir!"

On the other hand, there were two midshipmen in the

spring of that year, very close to graduation. They were supposed to be at their fencing lessons, but they cared more for swimming, and so they were in the pool. The swimming instructor, looking over his ducklings, decided he had too many. He took a roll call. The two extra men found themselves before the stern-visaged duty officer.

"Were you supposed to be at the fencing class?" Halsey asked.

They were.

"Then why weren't you there?"

They didn't like fencing, they said. They preferred swimming and they couldn't see what difference it made whether they got their exercise in the pool or with the foils. Anyway, in war these days a naval officer had better be a good swimmer, rather than an artist with the thin blades, if he wanted to do something really beneficial for himself. Foils were not very effective against 16-inch guns, and by the same token decks could sink out from under you if the other fellow had too many 16-inchers. American officers couldn't walk on the water, not even duty officers, though most of them seemed to think they could.

That was the tenor of their arguments, either expressed or silent, and Halsey seemed to grasp what they meant. In fact, he said he could sympathize with them very much, because he personally would rather swim than fence any day, and he couldn't see that it made any particular difference where or how they

worked up a sweat, except that—and here he leaned over his desk and made himself emphatic—they were breaking discipline.

“Gentlemen, it is very important for a naval officer to learn to follow his orders. If he hasn’t learned that by the time he graduates from this academy, his years here have been wasted. It would be impossible to run a navy if every officer did only what he happened to like. If a midshipman was so lax in discipline that he would go one place when duty-bound to be somewhere else, he might prove a dangerous officer on a ship in battle. I’d hate to have him running around on his own when the fireworks started. Do you see what I mean?”

The somber midshipmen understood.

“Now,” continued Halsey, “I’m exaggerating the case, of course, but not the principle. It is most important, believe me, and I do not relish my duty, which is to mete out punishment to fit the offense.”

Even the downcast middies felt sure of his reluctance to impose sentence, but they also were sorrowfully confident that they were going to get the works, and they did. The chunk of demerits slapped on them by Halsey almost kept them from graduating, and handicapped their careers forever after. The drawling rebel, chewing tobacco and swallowing it so he could truthfully say, “No, sir,” represented a respect for discipline, even the irksome kind, while the other infraction indicated a serious flaw in a man’s spirit. It is a curious item of history, however, that one of the pair who collected the stiff jolt of demerits lived to say later that Halsey was

perfectly justified, in fact that the lieutenant had no other course. He bore no rancor, but instead contended that Halsey as an admiral was among our truly great naval commanders.

Mrs. Halsey, however, was not quite so understanding when it came to these fine points of discipline—at least, if to her woman's view the matters were unimportant—and so she shook off much of the Navy influence with the insouciance of a duck with water. Several rules and practices at Annapolis definitely left her unimpressed. For instance, her heart was too tender for her to watch the midshipmen being turned into officers by the older men who played the Spartan as duty officers. One cold winter day the regiment lined up and Lieutenant Halsey walked along the ranks slowly. Mrs. Halsey, en route home from the commissary, stopped to observe his inspection. He proceeded without interruption until he came to a tall, skinny midshipman who looked boyish, cold and hungry. Actually he was none of these, but that didn't count with the lady. Her husband stopped.

"What kind of socks are you wearing?"

"Sir," mumbled the midshipman, his eyes getting wild.

"Let's see."

The boy with the gaunt and frozen appearance slowly pulled up a pants' leg. Involuntary gasps came from his fellows as he stuck his exposed shank in front of him, and in the range of eyes that could swivel without any movement of the head. Instead of the regula-

tion black variety, he was wearing red; not a somber color, tending toward black, but a brilliant hue that might have doubled for a raging forest fire.

Halsey passed on and, when the regiment was dismissed, the boy with the flaming anklets was on his way likewise, at a snail's pace, head down, a vision of dejection.

"What," demanded Mrs. Halsey, "will you do to him?"

"Demerits," said the lieutenant.

"How many?"

"Oh," said he, glancing at the sky as though in profound retrospection, then starting to count in fives on his fingers, "let's see; five, ten, fifteen, twenty, thir—"

"It's a shame. It really is, and all over red socks!"

"But, the regulations—"

"Keep your old regulations, and don't mention them to me again!"

Thereupon a strange thing happened. Mrs. Halsey, never one to take early morning walks, insisted now on striding out of the house with the lieutenant as he set off for his duties. Although slightly puzzled, he also was flattered, and they tripped across the grounds hand in hand, each and every morning, including the mornings it was his duty to inspect the regiment. At breakfast she always asked for an outline of his program until noon, although he couldn't see that it made any difference, and then accompanied him, no matter where he was bound.

At the same time he noted a marked change for the

better in the discipline of the regiment, at least for his inspections. No more red socks, no dickeys instead of shirts, no cheeks bulging with plug cut.

Just proves what I've always contended, he said to himself. If you bear down on these boys, hard but fairly, they'll toe the straight and narrow, and that's the foundation on which good officers are built. We must have discipline. He felt justified in his own outstanding strictness in comparison with the other officers.

But he puzzled a little over the reports. He certainly put on the most thorough inspections of anyone on the faculty, and yet the regiment scored its highest under his gimlet gaze. However, he dismissed that, too, as the fruits of a real discipline.

Then one morning he thought he saw a midshipman, strolling out of his barracks, take a quick look at Mrs. Halsey, turn and race back in and reappear in a moment with a fresher pair of gloves. He glanced at his wife. Nothing unusual in her appearance. She'd merely put on her bright green coat instead of the blue one she'd worn the day previously. The two following mornings, he noticed idly, she wore the blue coat, then switched to the green when he was inspecting again.

On the following inspection day, he hurried to the closet in the front hall of their home, pulled out the blue coat and held it for her. She shot a quick look at his face, but it was bland.

"I think," she said, "I'll wear the green one."

"I like the blue much better."

"The green one, please."

"The blue," he said, "is so much more becoming—" he paused "—especially on inspection days."

She looked into his face again, into his eyes. "I think I'll stay home, I've just thought of a number of things I have to do."

He put the green coat back on its hanger. "Goodbye, darling," he remarked as he kissed her, and put his cap on straight and started out the door. "I'll miss you in the mornings now, and I'm sure the midshipmen will miss you, too."

"Well," she said, tilting her chin, "I still think it's a shame."

In April, 1917, the Halseys were living at 39 Usher Road on the grounds of the Naval Academy, and on a certain day of that month, Mrs. Halsey ran through a cold rain in response to cries of "Extra! Extra!" Nervously she paid a nickel for a newspaper which carried but one word, in great, black type all the way across the top of the page: "WAR!"

One week later Halsey, now a lieutenant commander, was off with his destroyers for England, for the fierce showdown fight with the German submarines, the fight which was won by the little American four-stackers and the officers, like himself, who handled them with consummate artistry. The British had at first looked upon this Yankee-created type of fighting ship with something between amusement and tolerance, because they said the first good sea which came along would knock them to pieces, but they had come to marvel as day after day they fought the twin terrors of howling weather above

and skulking pig boats below, gradually helping pave the bottom of the English channel and the Irish Sea with disillusioned Germans forever encased in their steel shrouds.

After temporary duty in the USS *Duncan*, Halsey assumed command of the *Benham* on February 19, 1918, and was jumped to the rank of commander. Three months later he moved his gear into the captain's cabin on the *Shaw* (an officer always is captain of any ship he commands, no matter how many, or how few, stripes may adorn his sleeves) and this vessel got notations in logs aboard several German subs as "A tough Yank" or "Give this one plenty of room." Detached from the *Shaw* on August 20, 1918, he hurried to Philadelphia to fit out the *Yarnall*, a lovely, big new destroyer with which he was going to sail right into Potsdam and pluck a handful of whiskers from the Kaiser's moustache. However, the armistice found Halsey and his new ship still in Philadelphia, consoling each other, with the commissioning ceremonies only eighteen days away.

Halsey had worked with our destroyers which were based at Queenstown, Ireland, and the Navy Department had found his efforts so satisfactory that he was awarded a Navy Cross, with a citation which said, succinctly and briefly, "For distinguished service in the line of his profession as commanding officer of the USS *Benham* and the USS *Shaw*, engaged in the important, exacting, and hazardous duty of patrolling the waters infested with enemy submarines and mines, in escorting



and protecting vitally important convoy of troops and supplies through these waters, and in offensive and defensive action, vigorously and unremittingly prosecuted against all forms of enemy naval activity."

Hazardous and important? "A Navy Cross," shrugs Halsey, from a later perspective, "didn't mean a thing in that war." Instead he prefers to dwell on a lighter note in his reminiscences.

His favorite episode concerned a puzzled young navigator who, at the Academy, had sort of given a quick brush to mathematics and the kindred sciences which go into the make-up of an officer, at least on the basis of practical performance. With this assistant supposedly absorbing the technique, Halsey had guided his ship to a certain point, at the mouth of a river on a barren stretch of the French coast, many times before, and so on one quiet night, groggy from exhaustion, he tumbled into his sack for a short respite, telling the youngster to wake him before they raised their landmark, a lighthouse at the river shortly after day-break.

The sun was high, however, when the navigator, his lips trembling, awakened the skipper.

"Where are we?" demanded Halsey.

"I don't know," confessed the youngster.

"What do you mean, you don't know?"

A pitiful tale was thereupon unfolded. Studiously employing gadgets on charts, the navigator, after hours of sweat and toil, had concluded he could take the ship in without difficulty, but when the French coast ap-

peared and he looked for the lighthouse and the river, what should appear out of the mist but a busy city with high buildings, automobiles and scurrying crowds of people. Gulping in amazement, the youth swung the destroyer around and headed back toward the open sea, where he paused long enough to check all his calculations minutely. Then he steamed once more for his goal and nearly jumped out of his boots and slicker when a range of jagged mountains materialized instead of the low, sandy beach, surmounted by a lighthouse, which he expected. Out to sea he went again, this time calling for more experienced advice. Under the hand of a master seaman, the ship then bowled along swiftly and surely, and there was the city again! The navigator covered his eyes, braced himself for a crash, but the destroyer never slackened speed. What is more, it didn't hit anything. When he figured they should be at the main intersection of the metropolis, if not headed upstairs in a tall office building, he ventured to look again, and there was the lighthouse on the port side, where it should have been, and the river in its proper place. He had met his first mirage.

World War I had taken William Halsey into action and excitement, but there was much of him left behind, also. In these years he and his wife began to rear a family. The first-born was Margaret Bradford Halsey.

"A wonderful little girl," said the doctor.

"What's wonderful about a little girl?" Halsey had growled, then quickly putting the surgeon at ease with one of his bright smiles, the assurance that he had no

intention of trying to trade her for a more desirable model.

"A fine little boy," said the same surgeon the next time.

"Now, you're talking," said Halsey, when opportunity offered. "You should have kept your mind on your business before."

The boy was named William Frederick Halsey, III.

Through the summer and into the fall of 1917, Mrs. Halsey cared for the two children and lived only for the letters that were postmarked, "U. S. Navy," sans clue of origin. Then came an early cold snap. The thermometer plunged, and she really missed the commander. The furnace wouldn't work. She shook this gadget and that, and opened doors and looked in, and got soot on her face, but all she could produce from the furnace was smoke, no heat. She sat for a while, and looked at the black monster, and her young daughter and son came and sat with her. Then they all went back upstairs, to put on their overcoats.

"I wish daddy would come home," said William F. Halsey, III.

"If he doesn't," said Margaret Bradford Halsey, "I guess we'll all freeze, and he'll find nothing but icicles instead of us."

Mrs. Halsey set off through the snow for help.

The summer of 1918 rolled around finally, with word that the commander was coming home for a visit.

With little squeals of delight the children answered the bell, at long last, but with big screams of terror

they fled from what they found. "Mother! Mother! A walrus is at the door!"

"Children!" reproved Mrs. Halsey, "It must be your father."

"No! No!" said William F., the third. "It's in uniform, but it's a walrus."

"What ails the younguns?" asked the commander, dropping his topcoat and cap upon a chair.

"What—" gasped Mrs. Halsey. "Your face!"

"My face?" said the commander. "Oh, you mean these," grasping with each hand like a man about to chin himself on a cross bar. "Why, my moustache. Rather neat, wouldn't you say?"

"Where did you get it?"

"It's mine," said the commander. "Grew it all by myself. Only took me a year."

"What's it for?"

"Oh, very natty, you know. All the rage in England. Utilitarian as well as ornamental, too. Wraps around your neck in nasty weather. Keeps you from getting a sore throat."

The next morning the Halseys left for an outing in the Blue Ridge Mountains. People along the way wondered why the sturdy, straight commander kept reaching up and twirling his fingers, as though he had something to smooth and dress—

"You look so much better now," said Mrs. Halsey.

"Yes, dear," said the commander.

But the grand days in the mountains soon came to an end. Halsey went back to the wars, and his family

returned to the home at the Academy. Mrs. Halsey was soon busy at Red Cross work. One afternoon as she rolled bandages the wife of another officer came in.

"Mrs. Halsey," she said, "go home, quickly! Little Bill has been run over!"

The youngster had dashed in front of a horse and wagon, the one knocking him down, the other crushing one of his legs. As a front wheel passed over him, a young reserve officer came out of nowhere and yanked him to safety. To the quick thinking and quicker acting of this reserve, the Halseys very likely owed the life of their child, for the rear wheel would have gone across young Bill's body. The officer was assigned to Halsey's destroyer. Before the war was finished, the commander was faced with one of the saddest tasks of his career. He had to report that the man who had saved his child had been washed overboard and lost during a storm in the Irish Sea.

With his leg in a cast, the boy was confined to a wheel chair. Then the whole family got the flu and at this precise moment Mrs. Halsey was informed she would have to move.

"But where to?" she asked, but nobody knew. "I wish this war would end, so my husband could come home."

She finally found a house in town. After the armistice, Halsey's destroyer acted as escort for the ship carrying President Woodrow Wilson to the ill-fated peace conference in France. Aboard the destroyer as a passenger was a man who was to play a stellar role in Halsey's later career, a Groton-and-Harvard-accented

Assistant Secretary of the Navy named Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Destroyers were the middle name of Commander Halsey for a considerable part of his career, and it was from his experience here that he learned the lessons of mobility and speed, as well as surprise, and developed into a war tactic the compacted sense of drive which would have carried him far in football had his weight been a little greater or his footwork a little nimbler. As it was, he perfected his talents with ships, and the earlier tin cans—they were little more than that—brought out the needed factors in new naval design.

The commander made his own notable contribution here during the 1921 maneuvers in Cuban waters. Halsey and his four-stackers were to stage a mock torpedo attack on our battleships. He was eager for the fray, since he was not long out of World War I, with an appetite for battle barely whetted. He prided himself on the fact that he could whip his squadron around as though the ships were the tiny sailboats he had once been able to handle so spectacularly on the Severn. He had his destroyers at a high pitch in training, and had infused his officers and men with some of his own vitality and love of action. His skippers were young and, like himself, just long enough removed from war to be eager for action, minus the caution that a long peace breeds.

Also, there is a certain disdain among destroyer men for battleships. They call themselves the "destroyer navy" and they make up the most rugged and devil-

may-care segment among the surface craft. Their cans are speedy and deadly, but small, uncomfortable—worse than a bucking bronco in a blow—and expendable. These men go without the niceties of their colleagues aboard the cruisers, battleships and carriers. They run short of food. Ice cream and fresh bread are treats to them. They are half under water in any heavy sea, the crews wet and miserable for days, trying to eat leftovers on jumping tables and wooing a spot of sleep at odd moments.

In the end it is these ships which are the ones to drive on for the in-fighting, the deadly close scrapping, either against larger craft or batteries on shore. Indeed a path of battle could be traced, were it possible to peer into the depths, by the torn destroyers that litter the bottom. And yet the men love it. They have to be hog-tied and carried aboard the comfortable but lumbering battleships.

This was the spirit aboard the speedy, low vessels commanded by Halsey in 1921 as he maneuvered for an opening. The proud ships of the line ploughed along serenely, one behind the other like gigantic ducks, except that there was a threat for a destroyer in every run, large and small, studding their dull gray sides as hick as quills on a porcupine. Indeed, there wasn't much tension on the big vessels, in fact not too much interest, for this after all was only practice. The destroyers would make a slight run at them, let go with a few harmless torpedoes which wouldn't come within city block of hitting anything, and then race away.

After that the admiral-umpires would argue hypothetical conditions until their already sun-drenched faces might even turn purple in spots, a most fascinating color effect, and then announce that so and so would have happened if such and such had been the case, or vice versa. Oh, well, yawned the battleshippers, who cares?

Suddenly their lookouts shouted about something, and the officers, obviously surprised, hurried over to the port side and saw Halsey and his destroyers cutting out of the slight haze which hid the Cuban coast.

What the hell was he doing coming from that direction? Didn't he know it was dangerous zooming along that close to shore, and in a fog? And furthermore, why the hell did he have to surprise them after they'd been all set for him from the sea side? A bloody nuisance, this Halsey.

However, they'd straighten their line out a bit and get ready to dodge his torpedoes, and then go below and have dinner, and let's hope it's roast beef or fried chicken tonight—a fellow really can get tired of too many steaks, no matter if they are thick and juicy—

The lookouts sang out some more. The battleship officers put their glasses on the destroyers. Why, they said, those cans are coming like bats out of hell. You'd think that guy was fighting a war.

There was long silence.

When's he going to make his turn? He should have turned off way before this.

A shorter silence.



What's the so-and-so doing? Does he want to run right up on our quarter decks? Hells bells, look at him skid those cans around! And he's really firing those torpedoes at us! We just gotta get out of here!

Bells jangled on the battleships, feet scurried over well-polished decks, and the big ships trembled and moved faster and turned as best they could. But Halsey's torpedoes, their white wakes streaming behind them, stabbed into the slow dreadnaughts. The impacts were so hard that the air flasks in the practice heads on the torpedoes exploded with a wham. In about one minute and a half Willie Halsey and his destroyer squadron inflicted damage estimated at one million, five hundred thousand dollars on the peace-loving vessels. The torpedoes knocked two propellers off one battleship, while another was hit so hard and so often that her crew untied their life rafts and fastened their best pairs of shoes around their necks. The flagship had a hole punched in it, and a torpedo that lost its direction, and swung back in a wide circle, nearly sank one of the destroyers.

"Let's hope they take those cans away from Halsey," said a dreadnaught skipper, "before he sinks the whole United States fleet."

The destroyers were taken away from him, but for other reasons. It was in 1922 when word came to the Halsey home that daddy was to go to Berlin as Naval Attache at the American Embassy. Young Margaret and Bill jumped up and down in excitement.

"What about school? We won't have to go, will we?" they said, hopefully.

No, they wouldn't.

"Wonderful!"

But there would be governesses.

"Oh," in disappointment.

Gloom also settled over them at discussions about where they would stay in London, en route to the German capital. A British admiral, it seems, had informed the commander that he should by all means take his family to a nice, quiet, sedate family hotel, the name of which began with a B, and stay away from the big, flashy hostelrys downtown.

"By jove, you wouldn't like those modern places," the commander quoted the admiral.

"But, daddy," said the kids, "we would."

"Hush," he said. "We're going to the B hotel. We're in the diplomatic service now and must act cultured and refined."

"But we don't want to be cultured and refined," said the kids. "We want to have fun."

"You," said he, "will stay in this high class hotel, and be refined."

So, they crossed the Atlantic and made their way to London and were ensconced in the B hotel.

"Daddy," said young Bill. "Where's the bathroom?"

"Just look around, my boy, and open a few doors. You'll find it. Remember, this is a big suite."

But Bill didn't find it.

"That's odd," said the commander. "Imagine a suite without a bathroom."

"I don't think this is a nice hotel," said Margaret.

"Well," said the commander, "it's sedate, anyway."

The next day, with an offspring on either hand, he met a friend, the naval attache at the American Embassy in London, and mentioned that he was staying at the B hotel.

"No!" said his friend. "Not actually!"

"Certainly," the commander repeated, a little huffily. "Why not? I notice a lot of Americans there."

"Well," said the friend, "that's probably true, but I'll guarantee they've been thrown out of every other hotel in London. I never heard of an American deliberately going there."

"Daddy," said Bill, "what does sedate mean?"

"Please," said the commander, "don't be like your mother."

In Berlin the Halseys got a suburban apartment. It cost considerably more than the commander felt he could afford, but these were the insane postwar days of inflation in Germany. Halsey didn't realize how insane, however, until he discovered that the German who owned the apartment had given it up because he couldn't afford transportation costs in Berlin. He'd sent his wife and two children to Egypt. It was cheaper than paying their fares downtown.

The apartment wasn't too comfortable, either, there being no heat and no hot water. But there were plenty of quilts for the beds, so the Halseys, when the weather

was cold, either visited friends who had heat, or stayed under the covers.

The commander thought at first that he'd change his plans and send the children to school, but found feeling against the Allies running so strongly that he went back to his original plans and asked Mrs. Halsey to obtain a governess. This proved to be easier asked than done. The first thing Mrs. Halsey discovered was that she would have to have a pair of governesses, there being some kind of an unwritten custom in Berlin against one governess looking out for two children, even in the desperate days of that period.

Speaking no German, Mrs. Halsey obtained a ten-cent dictionary and went about interviewing applicants. She hired one, after a two-hour talk in which she discovered that a ten-cent vocabulary is somewhat limited. About all she ascertained was that the woman wanted a job. Later she obtained another female caretaker and assigned her to Bill, but complications arose. The housekeeper, it seemed to Mrs. Halsey, started serving meals as though she were operating an all-night lunch counter. Breakfast would continue from seven to ten, lunch from then until three, and dinner until goodness-knew-when.

"What's the idea?" Mrs. Halsey inquired.

"They won't eat together," sighed the housekeeper.

"Who won't?"

"The governesses."

Bill's keeper had come in for her first breakfast, taken one quick look at Margaret's governess, and

marched right back out again, sniffing daintily in her kerchief.

"But what was the trouble?" asked Mrs. Halsey.

"Aristocracy," said the housekeeper.

And that was it. Bill's lady-in-waiting had blood which was entirely too blue to permit her eating at the same table with the gentle riff-raff, however equipped with degrees from half the universities in Europe, who was setting the pace for Margaret.

The children saw a good deal of the Continent on that trip, since it was three years before they got back to America. Halsey was ordered from Berlin to additional duty at the American Embassies at Christiana (later Oslo), Copenhagen and Stockholm, and then was given command of the USS *Dale*, operating with the U. S. naval forces in European waters.

Thus this generation of Halseys was hitting a familiar trail. With his wife, son and daughter, the commander had to pinch himself occasionally to be sure he wasn't back with his mother and father and sister. However, there was to be a respite in the moves. In January, 1927, Halsey reported as commanding officer of the *Reina Mercedes*, station ship at the Naval Academy.

The naval quarters at Coronado, Vallejo, Hawaii, Cavite, Panama and China hadn't altered. The ships and men were changing fast, but the same old houses and apartments seemed perpetual landmarks. It was the same at Annapolis. The school buildings were getting bigger and better, and so were the midshipmen,



This view of the Pearl Harbor attack was sent to neutral countries by the Japanese for propaganda purposes. Said Jap caption: "Our sea eagles' determined attack has opened . . ." (*U. S. Navy Photo from I.N.P.*)



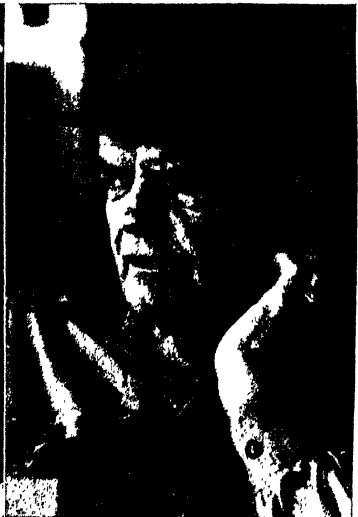
*Admiral Halsey . . .*



*. . . listens . . .*



*. . . thinks . . .*



*. . . gives the answer.*

Four views of the Admiral in action. (U. S. Navy Photos)

but "The Corrals," of fond memories as home to a former generation of Navy children, still were there. Not the same ones. Just some more of the same. Hence, when Mrs. Halsey surveyed her new home she was far from pleased. She remained some moments in deep reflection, then—

"This will never do," she commented coolly.

"I beg your pardon," said the commander. "What will never do?"

"This ship," said Mrs. Halsey.

"But, my dear—"

"No," she said, "I will never live here. It isn't a fit place for human beings."

He had to admit there was considerable justice on her side, as the old scow had been in need of many things for many years, but he couldn't see any chance of their residing elsewhere.

All right, said Mrs. Halsey, she would relent, but only with the proviso that she be allowed to do the place over so that, in her estimation, it would be livable.

"Fine," agreed Halsey, with a sigh of relief. "Go right ahead, my dear."

He was to wonder about the wisdom of this at later dates. It seemed that the old *Reina Mercedes* was being re-outfitted from top-mast to keel. Mrs. Halsey pored over magazines for ideas. Dusty cabins became dainty powder rooms; portholes took on the appearance of lace-curtained bay windows, and fruits of the science of horticulture became evident.

"It's difficult to tell whether we're living aboard a



ship or in a floating flower garden," said the commander.

"I trust you like it," said Mrs. Halsey.

"Oh, yes," he replied, hastily. "I like it exactly this way."

The ship actually became impressive under Mrs. Halsey's natural skill for decorating and arrangement and her hard work, and the commander soon was eager to invite friends and acquaintances aboard for little fetes, shrugging off their expressions of admiration and envy with, "Oh, we think it's cozy."

Mrs. Halsey let him bask in her reflected glory until he brought a senator and six other guests home for a luncheon. Navy people, generally, do not do too much speaking out to senators, because in the unpredictable future the solons might be passing upon numerous measures affecting the Navy, and in particular upon promotions of flag officers.

The senator came aboard the refurbished *Reina Mercedes* and said, "My, what a nice place."

"Oh, it's comfortable," said Halsey.

The senator looked around some more.

"Why," said he feelingly, "this is really charming; genuinely delightful."

"We like it," said Halsey.

"I didn't realize," said the senator, "that the Navy was so good to its officers."

Halsey made no reply to this.

During the meal the senator reveled in some of his hostess' most delicious delicacies. "Mrs. Halsey," he

said, "I must congratulate you; I really must. Never in my life have I enjoyed a luncheon so much."

"Just a bite we whipped up," said the commander.

Unbuttoning his vest, the senator relaxed with a fat cigar, until he felt the weight of his timepiece and chain across his stomach. Snapping open his watch, he remarked, "My, I must be going."

At the gangway (front door), he picked up his hat and cane, licked his lips at the still verdant memories of the food, let his admiring eyes rest once more on the Halsey household afloat and said with a gay smile, "You know, I wish I could find somebody to furnish me with a house like this and food like that," indicating the dining room. "I think I'd like to resign from the Senate and become a commander and avoid such bothersome details as paying rent and grocery bills."

"Well, as a matter of fact," said the commander, and stopped.

"Yes?" said the senator. "You were saying, 'As a matter of fact—' "

"Oh, nothing," said Halsey. "Excuse me."

"Certainly," said the senator, "speak up any time, about anything."

"Thank you, Senator." But it wasn't Halsey; it was Mrs. Halsey. "I'd like to say a word, if you don't mind."

The commander glanced at his wife. "Well, goodbye Senator, and all of you," he said hurriedly. "Be sure and come back. We'll be looking for you." Holding Mrs. Halsey by the arm, he started backing away.

However, the senator was interested, and Mrs. Halsey was determined. Courteously but firmly, she explained that the Navy did not furnish the ship for free and that all the Halsey vittles came C.O.D.

"You mean—" began the senator.

"I mean," said Mrs. Halsey, "that naval officers pay rent, and plenty of it, for the places in which they live, and buy their own food, unless it's near the end of the month, in which case they borrow it from a neighbor."

"Thank you," said the senator gravely, "for setting me straight."

Back aboard, Halsey said, "Well, I dunno," as he dropped into his favorite big chair and reached for his most treasured pipe.

"I was not going to have him go away," said Mrs. Halsey, "under any false impressions."

"He didn't," said Halsey. "But—"

"But—what?"

"Well, you never know—"

"Don't worry. I think he's a big man and that he appreciated the information. I'm sure I was right," said Mrs. Halsey.

The next night when he arrived for dinner the commander found Mrs. Halsey bustling around a large vase fairly choked with immense red roses.

"What the—" began her husband. "Where did those come from?"

"A messenger brought them," said Mrs. Halsey airily, "with this card."

Halsey glanced at the card and read the name of the senator.

"Now, what have you to say?" asked Mrs. Halsey.

"I can't miss becoming an admiral now," laughed Halsey.

Indeed, Mrs. Halsey had done her decorating much better than she had bargained for, because the fame of the new *Reina Mercedes* spread until the ship became a mecca for all the curious Navy individuals, and a few civilians, who were thinking of doing rooms or houses over.

"My dear," said the women. "You should see what that clever Mrs. Halsey did with that awful old ship." And straightaway they'd go see. The gold fish in the midshipmen's assembly room were living in a sealed chamber, compared with the Halsey domicile.

And history kept repeating itself in another direction, very much helped by this course of events, since the commander, on one late autumn afternoon after a football game, felt impelled to remark to his wife, "You know, it seems good to have all these midshipmen around the house. Just like when I was going to school. Our house always was like that. Guess they like me, just as they liked my father."

"The fact that you had a sister may have had something to do with it," said Mrs. Halsey.

"Oh, sure," said the commander, "but my sister was a young woman, while Margaret is only—"

"You'd better put on your glasses."

Halsey laid aside his book and strolled from the library into the living room, which was filled with laughing midshipmen, and Margaret.

"Nice day," said the commander.

"Yes, sir," said the midshipmen, as silence settled over the room.

"Have a good time," said the commander.

"We will, if you'll only get out."

Who'd said that! Why, no one, of course. It was only his conscience speaking in the light of almost a lifetime at the Academy. He resumed his reading in the library.

"Well?" said Mrs. Halsey.

"As usual," said the commander, into the book, "you're right. But where have all the years gone?"

Mrs. Halsey was reminded of something else, namely, that Margaret's grades, which had been high, had been slipping of late. "These midshipmen are a distraction to a pretty girl."

"Where," said the commander, "have I heard that before?"

And so, like his sister a generation previously, his daughter now packed her bags with the latest creations for 'teen agers and set out for a private school, not within walking or driving distance of Annapolis.

"I hate to leave all these nice boys," said Margaret.

"Your aunt would know exactly how you feel," said Halsey.

"But they need me," said Margaret.

"They'll get over it."

"How do you know?"

"They always do," said Halsey.

"These are different."

"Midshipmen always are the same."

"Really?"

"Sure, they're just like their fathers."

In the winter of 1932, after Halsey had won his fourth stripe for a captaincy and had returned to the fleet, he was commanding a squadron on maneuvers while his family awaited his return home for another long-promised vacation. For weeks they had planned where they'd go and what they'd do. Then a message arrived from the captain that, although he was sorry as could be, he simply couldn't get back, and would they please forgive him?

They would, but the younger Halseys were not easily consoled, and Mrs. Halsey remarked, "You have to become accustomed to that, if you're married to a naval officer."

"But," asked her daughter, "don't other men disappoint their families sometimes, too?"

"Quite likely," conceded her mother.

Margaret was to ascertain the verity of that, for with the uncertainty of a lovely blonde she vowed that only a naval officer who looked like her father ever could win her heart, and then promptly married P. Lea Spruance, a tall, dark youth who didn't know starboard side from upside down about ships, but who could get the right answers in an office, and who took her to live in Wilmington, Delaware, where he was one of the promising youngsters in the DuPont empire. He was a distant

relative of a Captain (later Admiral) Raymond A. Spruance, USN.

Young Bill Halsey, the third, was as set on Annapolis as his father had been before him. He worked diligently for the day when he would become a midshipman, but it was not to be. He was well qualified in every way, except for his eyes. He ate carrots and nearly drove oculists mad trying to correct his vision, but he never could call the charts right. Bill thereupon grinned off his bitter disappointment, and went to Princeton, where he hit the Halsey academic and athletic stride, except that he took up boxing instead of football. Upon being graduated, he joined his brother-in-law with the DuPonts at Wilmington. When the war came along, however, he scrambled for the Navy, but with his dim vision he had to take a commission in the supply corps, upon completion of the Navy's course at Harvard.

Assigned to the carrier *Saratoga*, he made an excellent record and was one of the best liked young officers on the great ship. A lieutenant, one of his shipmates, has this to say about him: "Bill was hard-working and unassuming. And he certainly never traded on his father's reputation. In fact, I didn't know he was the admiral's son for quite some time after he came aboard. He acted like anything but a hot-shot's kid. I only discovered his identity in a manner which was rather embarrassing to me. Bill sat near me at dinner and one night several of us, including Bill, were talking about a remark which the newspapers had credited to Admiral

Halsey. My comment was, 'I think the old son-of-a-bitch is full of hot air.' At first there was deep silence, then Bill fairly howled in laughter, the others joining him. I said to the officer next to me, 'What's so funny?' and he said, 'The old son-of-a-bitch is Bill's old man.' I apologized, but Bill said it was perfectly okay, he was sure his father wouldn't have objected either."

After eighteen months doing his part in the Pacific, Bill came home on leave and was married at Philadelphia to Mary Selkirk, daughter of the Benjamin Johnston Selkirks, of St. Louis, a pretty, dark-eyed, slender and vivacious girl, a graduate of St. Louis University and, needless to say, deeply in love with him.



# 7



WHEN Halsey left the *Reina Mercedes*, in the summer of 1930, with the rank of captain, he had made the biggest hurdle in a naval officer's career, which is the one between commander and captain. Many become commanders, but few are chosen as captains. The selection board has to trim hard, because there are comparatively few berths for the higher grade. A year as commander of a destroyer squadron followed, then instruction both at the Navy and Army War Colleges, where the premium was on thinking and where Captain Halsey put on his thinking cap so tightly one day that he came to a conclusion which was to be of more value to the United States than a shipyard full of battleships. He decided to study aviation.

Halsey's decision to become an airman was nothing sudden. For years the conviction had been growing within him that aircraft would play a leading role in the next war, and he also was student enough of international affairs to be convinced that a new conflict was in the making. In World War I he had speculated on

the possibilities of aircraft for search missions and upon their bomber potentials. The tests upon the old battleships which led to the General Mitchell imbroglio, and the claims that ships couldn't be sunk that way, did not impress Halsey much, because he felt that the conditions on both sides were rigged, and that it wasn't a fair tryout.

When catapult planes were installed on battleships and heavy cruisers, it meant that the U. S. fleet could see hundreds of miles farther than previously, and by the same token could slip up and attack a planeless enemy much as a healthy fighter could run in and punch a half-blind opponent. An old collier, the *Langley*, had been converted into the world's first aircraft carrier, and Halsey saw planes take off and land on her makeshift flight deck. It was the same thing as putting pontoons under a shore field and moving it out to sea. The possibilities were increasing and Halsey was worried. He wanted to know more about aviation. Then came the *Saratoga* and the *Lexington*, two fast, powerful ships, originally built for battle cruisers but changed over to aircraft carriers to conform with treaty clauses.

Speed and strength had been added to the *Langley* recipe. Aboard the *Lexington* one day Captain Halsey watched the planes zip into the air and then return for graceful landings, and said, "The naval officer in the next war had better know his aviation, and good." War College contemplation gave him some additional ideas on the employment of this new weapon, and the reso-

nant tones of the commencement speaker had hardly floated away into the far reaches of the balconies before Halsey had asked to be given special training in flying.

"Carriers," he said, "are a definite challenge to battleships, their other uses may be infinite, and carrier skippers should be flyers."

He requested that his name be added to the rolls at the Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida, but ran into a barrage of friendly scoffing and official doubt and apprehension. The course for pilots was closed to him.

"Why?" he said, shoving out his tough jaw. "Why couldn't I learn to fly?"

"A matter of age," he was informed politely.

"How much of a matter?"

It seemed the matter was considerable. The Navy would not accept candidates for pilots' training who were more than thirty-one. It took no lightning calculation to figure where that left Halsey. He was fifty-one.

"You're slightly over age," smiled the air officer.

"In years only," Halsey assured him. "My spirit is young."

None of his associates had any doubt of that.

"And your eyes?" he was reminded.

"Excellent," he said, "absolutely twenty-twenty," adding under his breath, "with my thick glasses on."

He had to laugh when the doctor said, "Read that chart on the wall." He got his cap down from the hall tree.

"Here," said the busy surgeon, "put on your spectacles. Good luck in your flying, and be sure to wear

them always, for it would be embarrassing to have to feel your way into a plane."

The undaunted captain who had been making the rounds of the Navy Department in his most persuasive manner, soon was bidding Mrs. Halsey farewell again. "I'll be down in Pensacola for awhile," he said lightly.

"What doing?" asked the lady.

"Oh, for a little special training; nothing to worry about."

"As an aviator?" she asked, incredulously.

"At my age, and with my eyes?" he said. "My dear, after all—"

Mrs. Halsey said she wouldn't have been at all surprised, and it was indeed gratifying to observe a glint of ordinary caution shining at last through his enthusiasm.

"Of course," he said, as he fled for the honking taxi out in front, "I may have to go up occasionally just to see how the other fellows do it, but other than that, why naturally—well, be seeing you."

At Pensacola, the commandant answered his phone. "A Captain Halsey is here, sir," said the officer on duty outside.

The commandant jumped. A captain! What in the name of— What was anyone of that rank doing here? Pushing a chair up for his heavily gold-braided visitor, he inquired if he might be of service, then sat stunned at the import of the papers Halsey handed him. The latter was reporting for instruction as a student observer!

But orders are orders and the commandant assigned Halsey, along with a flock of chattering ensigns and jaygees, to various instructors, the captain drawing Commander Bromfield Nichol, who later was to act as assistant operations officer on Admiral Halsey's staff. The others strained their young necks in a series of double-takes when their grizzled comrade joined their ranks, but soon learned not to defer to him. He neither needed nor asked any breaks and, as a matter of fact, most of them managed to find business elsewhere when he wanted to play games.

"He's a very tough turkey," they said.

After preliminary study on the ground, the observers were taken aloft. In some strange manner, which Halsey to this day refuses to explain, it wasn't long before he was at the controls, taking off, flying through the bright blue heavens, and landing, right along with the young pilots, although not always in the same place nor in precisely the same manner. During a storm which blew up suddenly, he gave the air station personnel some bad moments. He was one of the last to land. Peering into the dark sky, lashed by scudding clouds, Nichol finally saw Halsey, buffeted and bouncing in the gale, but apparently headed for the field.

"Get ready for a crash landing. This looks bad."

The medics and the fire truck got ready, but Halsey skimmed over the trees at the far end of the field, dropped lightly to the runway in a perfect, featherlike landing, and then taxied smoothly up to the astonished onlookers.

"Why all the crowd?" he inquired casually, climbing out.

"We're certainly thankful, captain, that you're okay," sighed Nichol in obvious relief.

"Thanks," said Halsey, "but why shouldn't I be?"

"The storm—" began the commander.

"Oh, that's nothing," said the captain. "Just a little blow."

"Well, you certainly handled your ship like an old-timer," smiled Nichol.

"Simple," said the captain.

However, the next afternoon, when the clouds had blown away and the sun was smiling down in perfect flying weather, Halsey came in again, clearing the trees at just the right height as before. There, however, the similarity ended, for he hit the runway with a bang, bounced into the air like a rubber ball, turned over and landed, kerplunk and crash! with his ship wrong side up. Crawling out of the wreckage and finding his personal damage confined to bruises and an egg on the back of his skull, he grinned, starting for his quarters.

"What happened?" asked Nichol.

"I was tricked," said Halsey.

"Beg your pardon?"

"Sure, I was," said the captain. "The ground hit me when I wasn't looking."

On a rainy day he made another perfect landing and then, with the sun setting on a lazy Florida afternoon, he almost missed the field, knocking over a boundary light.

"Why," he inquired plaintively, "do people move this landing strip and then forget to put it back where it was?"

The commandant was mystified.

"The worse the weather, the better Halsey flies," Nichol told the commandant.

After his first off-the-cuff landing, one of Halsey's young mates shyly handed him a huge leather medal, the Order of the Flying Jackass, reserved exclusively for bumlbers. Halsey promptly put it on and wore it for the prescribed ten days, and then repeated the procedure.

"May I have it?" he asked Nichol, and then, "Thanks, I'm proud of it."

A tradition of the station called for the dunking of each cadet after his solo flight, his colleagues tossing him into the bay. A banzai for accomplishment, they called it. On the day when Halsey first flew without help, after only twelve hours of instruction, he walked along the dock, his cap jauntily on the back of his head, his leather jacket whipping in the breeze, and found a group of ensigns, their shirt sleeves rolled up, uncertainly awaiting him.

He stopped. "How do you do, gentlemen," he said, looking sternly at them.

"Good afternoon, sir," they replied in a faint chorus.

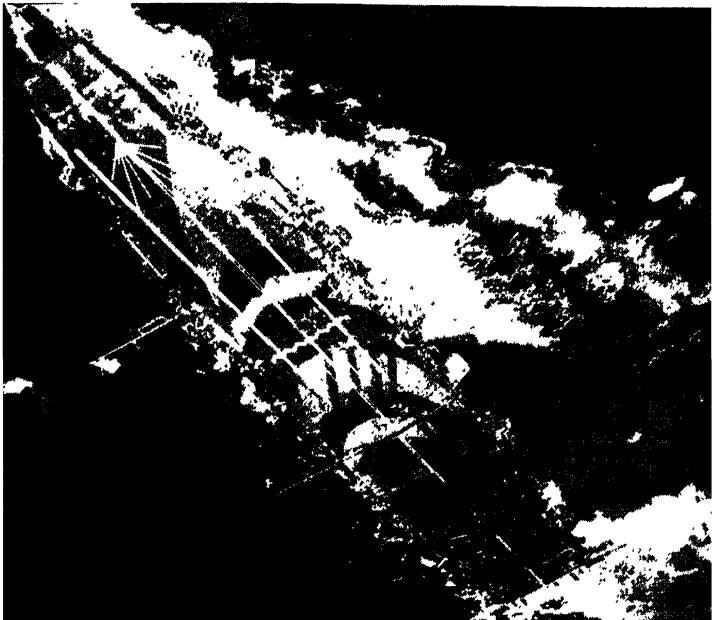
"Holding a convention?"

"Oh, you know," they fumbled. "We just thought—oh, about the banzai—"

"Well," he demanded, "what are you waiting for?"



Off Leyte, a Jap bomber is downed in a hail of flack. (*International*)



A Jap carrier of the *Zuiho* class is hit by Yank bombs. (*International*)





Falsey on deck of a warship during Philippine campaign. (*International*)

With a whoop, they descended on him.

"Those kids," he laughed that night, "threw me so far that I was wishing for a well-provisioned life raft before I got back to the shore."

In the long line of graduates there was no chest which protruded quite so far as Halsey's as the commandant pinned on the golden wings of a Navy pilot. In quarters, packing for his leave, he looked down at the insignia, saying to his roommate, "No greater honor ever will be accorded me."

Mrs. Halsey awaited him at Buffalo, for a sort of second honeymoon. They were going to Niagara Falls and visit all the haunts of the tourist country. At the commercial air field she saw him alight from his plane and stride through the crowd in a beeline for her—and on his breast shone the wings.

When she had disengaged herself from his bear-hug, Mrs. Halsey stepped back to examine them. "Very pretty," she said.

"Sure are." The captain gave them a swipe with his sleeve.

"A pilot's wings, aren't they?"

"That's right."

"What did you promise me?"

"I didn't promise—" began the captain.

At their hotel, the doorman said to their taxi driver, "Who's the captain? I'll bet he can get tough."

"Maybe he can," said the cabbie, "but, brother, he ain't tough now."

The outing thereafter was unmarred, except for one

incident. In the bedroom of their hotel suite, Mrs. Halsey heard the captain entertaining some male friends in the parlor.

"But what's it for?" asked one of the men.

"It's an honor."

"What's the jackass got to do with it?"

"That shows you're an experienced flyer."

Mrs. Halsey peeked out. The captain was proudly fingering the big leather medal which was hanging from his lapel. "Excuse me," she said.

"Certainly," said the guests.

"I'll have to put it away now," said the captain.

Halsey continued to fly, however, and still does, whenever the opportunity affords, his flight log showing more than 1500 hours. His wings represent the continued efforts of a highly experienced airman, and he had won them the hard way, which represented something important to several other persons in addition to the captain himself. These included the inhabitants of the sacred precincts of the Navy Department building in Washington, who reasoned with Halsey that the next war at sea would go very badly for a nation deficient in air power. Thus it happened that as he was concluding his short leave in Buffalo, wondering what duty was next in store for him, he received orders to return to Pensacola for further study.

He remained among the airmen there for five more months, absorbing tactics and all of the advanced flying technique available at that time. Departing from Florida in May, 1935, he stopped off in Washington

for a month, then climbed aboard the giant carrier, *Saratoga*, as her commander. After two years he came ashore to be the Number One man at Pensacola—from June, 1937 until May, 1938—and departed with flag rank, as a rear admiral, up where the atmosphere was rarefied—indeed, becoming thinner all the time. Returning to sea, he commanded Carrier Division Two, with his flag on the *Yorktown*, and in June, 1940, went on up to vice admiral, where he could look right in at the Throne, so to speak, assuming command of all aircraft in the battle force, moving his gear into the suite reserved for Mr. Big in the *Enterprise*.

# 8



ABOUT the middle of November, 1941, Halsey was given an assignment to ferry some Marine planes to Wake Island from their fields in Hawaii. That was during the period when Uncle Sam was doing what he could to stall off war with the Japanese, who were strutting about the world's stage with chips on their shoulders and obviously getting set to hit out hard. It was thought best to say nothing about strengthening our air defenses on Wake, lest the Japs say, "Look, the Yanks want to fight."

So, secrecy orders were given to Halsey. He made sure there would be no leaks by sitting down at his desk aboard the Big E and formulating a set of formidable instructions. He folded the papers carefully, placed them in his pocket and went out on deck to supervise the loading of the planes, which were to play such a major role in the heroic defense of the island. When he got the aircraft all tucked away in the *Enterprise*, and had checked off the Marine flyers to be sure the right ones were aboard, he headed out to sea with his

smaller escorting ships. This was on November 27, 1941.

He cleared the Pearl Harbor breakwater under strict radio silence, then hauled out what later was to become:

### Battle Order Number One

1. The Enterprise is now operating under war conditions.

2. At any time, day or night, we must be ready for instant action.

3. Hostile submarines may be encountered . . .

There were more, but these three directives give the idea. The officers and men of his task force snapped back to life, which had almost been squeezed out of them by dull, dreary patrols for months under restrictions and annoyances. They had felt they had been playing at getting ready for war. No one seemed to have any notion whether the preparation was for conflict in the 1940s or at the turn of the next century. Officers and sailors alike were fed up with routine. They wanted action of some kind, somewhere, and they didn't care much where.

They read the admiral's order number one and said, "This looks like it may be it."

Then he issued more orders. All planes aboard his ships were to be made ready to fight. The bombers were to load their bombs onto their racks, the torpedo bombers were to get their aerial fish aboard and the fighters, as well as the others, were to stock up with belts of ammunition for their machine guns.

Also, all the big and little guns on the ships were to be re-examined to make sure they would go off in the proper and prescribed manner. This was encouragement enough in itself but the crews were electrified by his next order:

"Sink anything you sight."

Other people, in addition to the Japs, would have been exercised had they known about that, say some of the diplomats in Washington—a few members of Halsey's staff, as a matter of fact, backed away from the bulletin board in something of a daze.

"Admiral," said one, "your orders look like war."

"You're damned well right."

"Are you going to start a war all by yourself?"

"Why not?"

"Well," said the officer, cautiously, "there's the matter of responsibility."

"I'll assume that."

"But how?"

"Very simple. We'll shoot first and argue afterward."

He knew the grave risk he was courting, not only diplomatically; but, of more importance, the chance that he might be annihilated in battle. With his force he'd be only target practice for any one of several fleets which the Japanese were reported to have sent snooping around the Pacific. Apparently, he reasoned that none of the enemy-to-be would be steaming between Pearl Harbor and Wake unless looking for a fight, and if that were the situation there was nothing

like being accommodating. He couldn't help seeing things that way, any more than he could help his protruding jaw. He was born to fight.

As he approached Wake, the admiral wrote messages to his two particular friends on the island, Lieutenant Colonel James P. S. Devereux, in command of the Marine detachment, and Commander Winfield Scott Cunningham, in charge for the Navy, and handed them to one of his flyers for delivery.

" . . . keep your nose clean and don't let a Japanese get you," the admiral advised the commanders, with no idea that it would be three years before he next could communicate with them.

Indeed, when war came, he avidly followed the reports of the fighting at Wake, with the satisfaction of knowing that those few planes he succeeded in delivering were worth their weight in diamonds. He learned later that the Marine pilots flew them until they fell apart, then patched them up with baling wire and string to take off again. They spotted for the artillery, which was an absolute innovation at the time, and fought off swarms of enemy flyers—even found the chance to sink a few Japanese ships and to strafe the decks of others. Finally only one plane was left, and as the enemy brought it down the end of Wake Island's heroic defense was near. On December 23, 1941, when he heard the Wake radio sputter off after the operator's last farewell, the admiral wasn't fit for human companionship. The Japanese finally had landed and the exhausted, battle-grimed Americans were taken



prisoners. Devereux and Cunningham disappeared into the silence of a prison camp—it might have been into the eternal silence of death, as far as Halsey knew.

The defense of Wake set the pace for the later violent island campaigns that stopped the enemy's southward rampage and finally defeated him. Colonel Devereux's garrison had killed Japanese at the ratio of thirty-nine to one, with every Marine fighting until the commander at last was forced to tell his men to put down their arms. Wake cost the invaders more than three thousand, seven hundred in dead, against ninety-six for the Marines. There were only four hundred and forty-eight of the latter on the whole island. Of the air forces, five out of eleven officers and twenty-eight out of forty-nine men were killed, most of them in the first enemy air raid, which had destroyed seven of the twelve planes delivered by Halsey, but left five to account for twenty-nine planes and ten ships.

Small wonder that the Japanese, when they came ashore, wanted to know where the Americans had hidden all the big guns. So spectacular was the showing of the defenders that a story got started, quoting Devereux, in answer to an inquiry as to how he was doing, replying, "Send us more Japs!"

On his return from prison camp, he denied sending any such message, adding, "After all, we weren't a bunch of damn fools out there."

Swinging away from Wake, after delivering his planes, Admiral Halsey continued on the outlook for trouble, not knowing that there was plenty of it just

over the horizon to the north, and that only his lucky star kept him from catching up with it. He had one carrier, two cruisers and some six or seven destroyers, while the Japanese were prowling around with two battleships, six carriers, eight cruisers and a dozen destroyers. Theirs was a fleet in any language, such as would almost certainly have made mincemeat of Halsey's force, despite all the admiral's fine qualities.

There they were, not far apart and running on parallel courses, Americans and the Japanese, both bound for the same place—Pearl Harbor. While the enemy slipped quietly in for the kill in his sneak attack, Halsey's flyers roamed the skies on various search missions, but never sighted the flotilla to the north, moving in for the first act in the new drama.

The admiral was due back at Hawaii at 8 A.M. on December 7th. Had he been on time, his ships might have added more items to the casualty lists, because at that hour the Japanese were getting in their most destructive assaults. Heavy weather delayed him, however. The day previously he had looked out over his force and decided his destroyers couldn't maintain their speed in the face of the smashing seas. So, with regret, he reduced speed. At dawn on the historic day he was still about a hundred and fifty miles from his destination. The weather had cleared. He decided to launch his planes from the *Enterprise*, sending them in ahead of the ships. It was good practice, both for the airmen and the defenders of the island of Oahu. The former could simulate bombing and strafing, and the anti-air-

craft gunners could train on live targets. Also, it was well to keep the shore crews on their toes by coming in unexpectedly.

After watching from his bridge until the last of the Big E's planes had roared away into the eastern sky, Halsey went into his wardroom for breakfast. At 7:55 A.M. he was smoking a cigarette over a final cup of coffee when his communications officer, Commander Dow, walked in. Halsey looked up. Dow was pale.

"What is it?" the admiral inquired.

Dow handed him a dispatch.

JAPANESE AIR ATTACK PEARL. THIS  
IS NO DRILL.

Halsey sprang up, spilling his coffee across the tablecloth, his chair crashing to the deck. "My God, they're shooting at our own men! Those are the planes I sent in this morning! They're my boys!" He turned to Dow. "Tell Kimmel! Hurry! Tell him to stop it, for God's sake!"

In a moment, the truth was driven home to the admiral, however. The war was on, but his first fears were tragically justified. Americans did shoot at other Americans in the awful confusion of the assault.

High in the sky the pilots from the *Enterprise* swooped toward their landings. There was smoke below and other planes, but the scene brought only a vague feeling of uneasiness to them, and they were puzzled. Then suddenly there were anti-aircraft shells bursting around them, with bullets whistling through their wings. And other planes were firing at them, planes

with the rising sun of Japan painted on their wings. Halsey's airmen may very well have shot down the first enemy plane in the war, since about forty Japanese pilots were downed. Anti-aircraft batteries made claims for the entire lot, but with Japanese firing at everything and the American men doing likewise once they recovered from their initial surprise—an imbroglio into which the *Enterprise* airmen found themselves without the slightest warning—nobody could give any really accurate account of what happened.

Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, commander-in-chief at Pearl Harbor, instructed Halsey to take command of all ships at sea as the senior officer afloat. Itching for a fight, Halsey swung north at top speed but found nothing, which probably was fortunate, as his fuel was low and his planes were gone. Lacking supplies, operating blind without aircraft for scouting, he returned to the base after his twelve-hour patrol, and entered the harbor on December 8th, his ships steaming slowly along Battleship Row. There was the *Nevada*, her nose up on a sandy beach, her stern under water; the *California*, sunk; the *Pennsylvania*, bomb-damaged; the *Oklahoma*, capsized and workmen with acetylene torches trying desperately to free the men trapped within her steel hull; cruisers and destroyers blown apart or listing heavily, and finally the dreadnaught *Wyoming*, a ship on which Halsey had long served, blackened by fire and twisted as though by a berserk giant, a steel shroud for more than a thousand officers and men.

While the *Enterprise* was fueling, Halsey went

ashore and had dinner with Kimmel, his closest friend in the service. The tension around the latter's headquarters was as tight as a fiddle string, and the physical strain was evident in the faces of the unshaven and tired officers. Rumors swirled about like a flood. Japanese transports were reported off Barber's Point. The enemy was landing in great strength on the other side of the island. These and dozens of more reports were false, but their effect on the officers and on the civilian population of the island was clearly evident. Everyone was as jumpy as a cat, and even the civilians grabbed their muskets several times and rushed to the beaches to repel invaders. Two groups of civilians, as a matter of fact, fired at each other from adjoining hill tops. Each thought the other was a company of Japanese paratroopers.

Morale was at its all-time low, with the best of the crews fighting hidden fears and nursing every sort of jitters. Admiral Halsey found outbreaks of this fear virus in his task force when he steamed out the next morning, through the boom-protected entrance of Pearl Harbor. His destroyers dashed in mad gyrations on anti-submarine patrol. The zigzagging was justified, because Jap pig boats could be skulking to pick off any remaining ships, and it was the job of the destroyers to clear the seaways. However, listeners reported strange sounds, and the admiral's flyers said there were things that looked like enemy vessels over all the various horizons. Halsey was getting pretty well surfeited when a crisis arose on his own bridge. A destroyer off

the starboard bow was dropping depth charges. Great geysers of green sea water were shooting into the air.

"Look!" cried an aide, pointing at the destroyer.

"What's the matter with her," asked Halsey, "outside of wasting depth charges?"

"She's in a bad way! Don't you see, sir, she's sinking!"

The destroyer rode down a wave, and came up on the crest of the next one.

"Look, yourself," said the admiral. "If you don't pull yourself together, I'll do something to quiet your nerves. What I'll do is throw you over the side."

A few days later another destroyer was a target for his attention. It kept getting out of line and lagging behind its sister ships. Halsey flashed a message to the skipper: "What division do you belong to?"

The skipper, startled and perplexed, replied that his ship was part of the tenth division.

Said Halsey, "Why don't you join up with it?"

Thus for two weeks the admiral engaged in a fruitless search, then started back again. His disappointment was evident, and so was that of his officers and crews, but they had themselves in hand. The Navy was really to start, and knew that it would have to start all over again, too!

As he neared Hawaii, the admiral heard a famous Japanese broadcast, one of many which were to infuriate him. This one gave him a foundation on which he built his accusation that "the lying monkeys haven't the truth in them."

"A special communique of great importance has just come from headquarters of the Imperial Navy," the Japanese broadcaster said. "The great American aircraft carrier *Lexington* has been sunk by a Japanese submarine in Hawaiian waters. First it was the *Langley*, then the *Saratoga*, then the *Enterprise* and now the *Lexington*, and the United States has no more aircraft carriers left in the Pacific."

Halsey was aboard the Big E, so he knew she hadn't been sunk by any means. The *Lexington* was ploughing along, big, tough, unharmed, in another task force, and those aboard who also heard the news were aware she was no Flying Dutchman come back from a watery grave to plague sailormen in the dark of the night. The *Saratoga* was in dry dock at Pearl Harbor, with a torpedo in her innards, but this was only a temporary indisposition, and she soon would be back at her old stand. The *Langley* was en route to the South Pacific. Thus, while the Jap communique was impressive, it was exactly a hundred per cent false, and the Imperial Navy, of course, knew it.

# 9



**T**HE admiral went ashore at Pearl Harbor, and reported to a new boss, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. The country was clamoring for retaliation of some kind, as quickly as possible, and so the Navy had taken a quick survey and decided on (1) Halsey, and (2) the Marshall Islands. For one thing Admiral Bill knew, as few other men in the world, the value of air power at sea, and how to employ carriers to the best advantage. Also, he was a fast thinker in an emergency. Unusual situations didn't disturb him.

"I believe in violating the rules," he would say, admitting, "We violate them every day, but whatever we do—we do!"

There's no question but that he was too unorthodox for the Japanese. He was seldom where they expected him, and after they found him he never played according to their books. He worked out his own formula for war, which was, "Hit hard, hit fast, hit often!" and followed it to the letter in the succeeding months, many of them bitter, touch-and-go. Disaster was often un-



comfortably close before the enemy caved in, finally, but Halsey never backed up, never quit slugging.

His task force which included but one carrier, the *Enterprise*, headed for the Marshalls in a cloud of question marks. His colleagues kept their fingers crossed so tightly that their knuckles cracked, wondering if they would get away from that section of the Pacific with a whole skin. In the first place, little was known about the islands. It was understood that the Japanese had a well developed base on Kwajalein, for both surface ships and aircraft, and that smaller bases had been built at strategic outlying places. Then there was the question of sending carrier planes against land based ones, because the former had to carry so much more weight in the undercarriage in order to withstand the shock of landing on a pitching, moving deck. Hence the opinion was widespread that the enemy would give the flyers from the ships a severe working over. There was a feeling that the Zeroes had too much class, with their fast climb and easy maneuverability. However, while the Oriental designers had provided a real surprise with the fighting qualities which had been built into the Zero, this was not anything to stop the Americans, although some did raise the question how the Yankee bluejacket and flyer, supposedly soft and spoiled by all the comforts of the richest country on earth, might stand up in combat with the lean, hungry, cruel and hardened brown man.

Another important imponderable was the possibility that the carrier task force might encounter a flotilla of



Halsey's Navy suffered. In the Pacific, the *Enterprise* sustains a heavy pounding by Japanese suicide pilots.



Comforting the wounded was one of Halsey's A-1 priority routines. Here he talks to a Marine in a Bougainville hospital. (*U. S. Marine Corps*)

enemy battleships and cruisers, which was not unlikely. All that Halsey had was speed and air power. He possessed nothing on the surface with which to stand off and trade punches with dreadnaughts, or even heavy cruisers. As ever forthright, the admiral decided to settle all academic questions for once and all, depending on surprise and striking at the enemy before he had any opportunity to gather his strength. His attack plans called for the task force to steam in close to Kwajalein, practically up to the docks. This was dangerous, right under the guns of a well-fortified base, but holding out promise of real success if his flyers could only smash the planes on the Japanese fields, or in the air over the island, before they could disperse to their outlying bases and turn the battle into a game of hunt and find.

With everything set as well as possible in advance, Halsey sighed in relief and in anticipation of the fight, starting to pace his bridge. It was late afternoon, the sky was overcast and the Marshalls were less than sixteen hours away. He only hoped he wouldn't get spotted at this late stage by an enemy airman on patrol. So far his luck apparently had been good.

Then a voice sang out: "Unidentified aircraft approaching at ten hundred!"

Halsey's heart skipped a beat. He looked over his flagship and the rest of his small force. The Big E was cutting through the water at top speed, but quietly and efficiently. The same held true for the accompanying cruisers and destroyers. But his mission right then rested squarely on what he prayed would be a kindly

fate. Soon he could hear the Jap's motors whining high above, and then slowly fade into silence over the horizon. Obviously the cloud layer had hidden them from the prying eyes above, for had the American force been seen certainly the pilot would have turned back, or dropped down, for a better look. Halsey not only was delighted, he had an idea.

"Take a message, please," he said to an aide, dictating:

*From the American admiral in charge of the striking force, to the Japanese admiral on the Marshall Islands:*

*It is a pleasure to thank you for having your patrol plane not sight my force.*

"Yes, sir," said the aide, wondering what he was to do with the dispatch.

Instructions were to have it translated into Japanese, then to have hundreds of copies printed and distributed among his pilots, to be dropped along with some choice bombs on the Japanese commander's headquarters ashore.

Halsey continued at full speed through the night, although his navigators, poring over old charts of doubtful reliability, thinking of reefs and mine fields, got so jumpy as the hours wore on that a bluejacket commented.

"Somebody ought to tie those guys down, before they hop over the side."

No man's nerves are perfect, however.

At three A.M. a staff officer on the bridge of the *Enterprise* cried out, "Sand!" Taking his hand from his stinging cheek and pulling his cap down tighter on his head in the stiff wind, he peered fearfully into the darkness, trying to decide whence came the tiny shower, perhaps harbinger of a nearby deadly beach. Some more grains cut into his face. He automatically licked his lips. The particles tasted sweet. Then he saw, dimly outlined in a steel chair just ahead and above him, a sailor lift something to his mouth. That, of course, would be a cup of coffee.

The date was February 1st and the big clock on the admiral's bridge showed 4:43 A.M. when Halsey quietly said to his air officer, "All right, let 'em go."

Within a few minutes the American planes, already warmed up and with pilots briefed, were streaking from the flight deck of the Big E into the darkness above, little ribbons of flame pouring from their exhausts. The carrier swung sharply about and retired to the protection of several cruisers, but it still was so close to shore that flashes from Japanese anti-aircraft batteries could be seen. The shore batteries searched first for a little float plane which was spotting for the cruiser force, the ships who had been assigned the pleasant duty of plastering shore installations. The eight-inch shells lobbed into the Japanese defenses and were answered by thunderous explosions from the oil tanks and ammunition dumps, testifying to their accuracy.

The Yankee airmen returned, loaded up with more

fuel, bombs and belts for their machine guns, and flew away again, keeping this up all through the day, resting only long enough to wash their faces and to bolt sandwiches and coffee.

"Is it tough?" asked an excited mechanic as one of the returning planes came to a stop beside him.

"A soft touch," said the pilot casually, jumping to the deck.

From their baptism of fire, Halsey's flyers came back with cold and calculating confidence. "All you gotta do is shoot 'em, and they fall."

On his bridge, the admiral garbed in a leather wind-breaker and an old white sun helmet, alternated at the radio as the air waves brought him the story over Kwajalein, and in watching the shuttling airmen, or in talking with them.

"That destroyer down there," shouted one pilot. "She's mine. I saw her first."

"Okay," said another, "then I'll go for the cruiser."

"Look at him burn!" said an American in awe as he poured incendiary bullets into a Japanese Zero.

Gazing down at the Big E's flight deck, Halsey said to his chief of staff, Captain Miles Browning, "Did you ever see such wonderful kids in your life?"

Browning admitted he hadn't.

"No," said Halsey, "and you never will."

For ten hours the raid continued, the *Enterprise* receiving and launching her complement of planes twenty-one times, Halsey meanwhile keeping his entire task force in an area only five by twenty miles.

At length, however, he turned to Browning. "What do you think?"

"I think we'd better be getting out of here," the chief of staff replied.

Halsey laughed. "That's my idea, too."

He walked toward the flag plot, but a shout brought him up short and he turned to see something which was to become all too familiar to the American fleet, and which was to claim an unhappily large number of American lives. Six Japanese heavy bombers were plummeting out of a cloud bank, starting their runs on the *Enterprise*.

The ship's ack-ack opened with a roar, whereupon the lead bomber started to smoke and wobble, obviously badly hit. Its pilot swerved from his bombing run, nosed over in a suicide dive.

Halsey flung himself on the deck, grunting as the other officers either landed on top of him or scrambled over his back. He was down only an instant.

"Get off of me!" he shouted and bounded to his feet. The *Enterprise* was turning, the enemy plane screened from the admiral's view by the ship's superstructure. He raced to the other side of the bridge in time to see the Japanese hit a parked plane on the flight deck, then bound harmlessly into the sea as it went up in a sheet of black smoke and fire.

Stalking back to his starting point, the admiral said to his flag lieutenant, "Where's that yeoman, first class?"

"Which one, sir?"



"The one who was laughing at me," said the admiral.

The yeoman being identified, Halsey ordered that he be advanced to a chief's rating, as a reward for emphasizing that it was undignified to flop onto the deck.

"And besides," said Halsey, "you can't see what's going on from down there."

When all the reports from the flyers had been checked and evaluated, the admiral announced that thirteen of his airmen had been lost, but against this the Japanese had lost thirty-eight planes and sixteen ships of various types and tonnages. Also, tremendous damage had been inflicted on many of the shore installations.

It wasn't much of a battle compared with what was to follow, but it was vital and exhilarating at the moment, for the Americans had started paying off the Pearl Harbor account and had found that the Japanese could be killed just like the soldiers and sailors of any nation. It was America's initial success after a string of setbacks, and it was good to the palate.

Steaming proudly into Pearl Harbor, the ships hoisted their largest pennants, signifying a victory, and from the other vessels and from the packed shore line came cheers from thousands of throats. Along the rails, the crew of the *Enterprise* tried to cheer back, but somehow they choked up. On his bridge, frankly and unashamed, the admiral wept.

Admiral Nimitz didn't wait for the *Enterprise* to lower a ladder, came aboard in a bos'n's chair. Throwing an arm around Halsey's shoulders, he hugged the

granite-faced commander and said fervently, "Nice going, Bill. Nice going."

The President hurried to add his congratulations, along with a Distinguished Service Medal. The citation said, in part: "For distinguished service in a duty of great responsibility as commander of the Marshall raiding force . . . and especially for his brilliant and audacious attack . . . and by his great skill and determination this drive inflicted heavy damage to enemy ships and planes."

After Nimitz had pinned the medal on him, Halsey called his staff into his office. Pointing to the decoration he said, "This isn't any more for me than it is for each one of you, for the victory belongs to you every bit as much as it does to me, and perhaps a little more. You made it possible for me to win this."

That night the enlisted men on the *Enterprise* discovered how he felt. Walking in unannounced and unexpectedly on the ship's movie, he made his way to the screen. The men stirred uneasily, without the faintest idea of what was coming. The show hadn't begun and they started jumping to attention. Turning and facing them, Halsey told them to be seated.

"I want to make a little speech," he said, and stopped, looking down and biting his lips. "I just want to say that I never was so damn proud of anyone in my life as I am of you."

The *Enterprise* rocked with cheers as the admiral made his way quickly up the middle aisle and out of sight.

Three weeks later Halsey and his fighting little task force struck again, this time at Wake, where they caught the enemy still immersed in memories of his victory over the Marines. The island was blazing when the Americans broke off the action, and the Japanese dead littered the sands. The cost to us was one dive bomber.

"Well, let's go home," said Halsey, as a messenger handed him a decoded radio dispatch. "No, let's not," he said as he read it. "We'll just keep going." The message, from Nimitz, asked Halsey to raid Marcus Island, a good run farther west from Wake, and only nine hundred and seventy-five miles from Japan.

Some of his staff officers for the next few hours made it a point to stroll through the flag shelter, stare at the compass course and remark, so that he would be sure and hear: "Why are we retiring westward? Somebody should point out to somebody that Pearl Harbor is to the east."

The Marcus raid, which also caused heavy damage and at the cost again of but one American dive bomber, caused the Japanese homeland to suffer a sudden fit of jitters. Previously serene and obviously feeling secure, the Japanese had not bothered to invoke a blackout, but when the Marcus radio started screaming that the Yankees were blasting the island, radio Tokyo threw a fit and ordered all lights out at once, with wardens and home guard sent hurrying to their posts on the double-quick.

It wasn't necessary right then, for Halsey turned

back from Marcus, but it was a straw in the wind which before long was to blow the admiral and another group of airmen over that way. On the second occasion radio Tokyo would grow hysterical in earnest, and for good reasons, all furnished by a small force of Army bombers led by a lieutenant colonel who later became a general. His name was Doolittle. Now Halsey was on his way to get him, although he could hardly know that.

The admiral had been missing his exercise and en route back to Pearl Harbor from Marcus he got in some strong licks in the name of good condition, romping out each afternoon at exactly four o'clock for an hour or so of deck tennis. Although weighing around a hundred and eighty pounds and about thirty-five years past his athletic prime, he could still put up a game that had most of his staff, including the youngsters, hollering "Uncle," before the green hills of Hawaii hove into view. In shorts and sneakers, he'd pound the ball so skillfully that he seldom was defeated, and he'd stand for no one easing up on him. At the least suspicion that his opponent was taking off the pressure, the admiral would stop the play and hurl such imprecations across the net that the culprit would grit his teeth and attempt to knock Halsey into the sea. At the end of the war, Halsey and a commander on his staff held the fleet doubles title. They never were defeated in a contest which went any distance.

His face was beet red these days, as it always was when he was at sea—since the sun irritated his skin—and occasionally his feet hurt. Because of the latter

fact, on certain occasions he would be the subject of comment among new officers, who were not accustomed to seeing an otherwise spruce and slick-looking admiral pattering across his bridge in carpet slippers.

"What the hell do you think I'll use for feet when these are gone?" he'd say. "I have to conserve them."

At Pearl Harbor he held a press conference. What did he think of his pilots?

"One American," he said, "is worth at least four Japs in aerial combat." Later he was to revise that materially.

Did he think there were any good Japs?

"The only good Jap," he said, "is one who's been dead six months."

Did the Japs have good ships?

"The day will come," he said, "when all Jap ships will be good ships—at the bottom of the ocean."

Was the enemy smart?

"As a strategist," said Halsey, "the Jap is a good croquet player."

Did he, Halsey, feel like relaxing?

"Not yet," he said, "but when we get to Tokyo, where we're bound to get eventually, we'll have a little celebration where Tokyo was."

The admiral by this time had worked out the tactics which were to bring disaster to the Imperial fleet. He insisted on full flexibility in carrying out a mission, without adhering to rigid, written plans conceived before the tactical situation developed. He had explored to the utmost the uses of the new offensive member of

the fleet—the aircraft carrier—and centered his operations around it, but he never fell into the error of assuming that the battleship has lost its usefulness.

“Speed and power are indispensable to any team,” he said.

At first he couldn’t use our battleships because they were old and slow. Hence his reorganized team of ships starred the carrier almost exclusively, and in a strictly unorthodox manner.

“We don’t stay behind the battle with our carriers,” he said. “We expose ourselves to shore-based planes.” Then he added the snapper—“We do the unexpected, and do it FAST.”

This formation, to be known as the carrier task force, he tried out first, of course, in the sensational hit-run raids on the Marshalls, Wake and Marcus. It reached a high state of perfection under his supervision and made it possible to leap-frog and by-pass. With proper logistical support, it became the primary naval weapon for fighting across the broad expanses of the Pacific.

Although Halsey originally placed the accent on speed, rather than weight, he was glad to add the weight, when new battleships became available, but even then he never sacrificed speed. Every ship in a Halsey task force had to be more than fast. It had to be a sprinter with the staying power of a miler. Also, radio silence was always maintained when he headed out from an advanced anchorage. Every device of deception and surprise was used, and when he reached his objective

his carrier planes struck from the skies like a thunderbolt.

Among other characteristics which contributed to Halsey's success were:

First, his flair for skillful maneuvering, which had impressed his colleagues since his War College days in the '30s, and which he had developed assiduously in working out tactical problems, always specializing in the new, the unorthodox and the unexpected.

Second, his special way with aircraft carriers in maneuvering them, whipping them around like destroyers, no doubt a hangover from his long destroyer experience.

Third, his ability to elicit the devoted cooperation of members of his staff and all the officers and men of his command, leading one of his staff to comment, "Halsey seems to wave a magic wand, and bring out the best in us."

Fourth, his imperturbability under pressure. There is the story of Halsey during one of the early carrier strikes. A junior officer saw him reading a novel on the flag bridge. He asked the admiral how he could relax enough to read during a battle.

"Why not?" said Halsey. "We planned the battle, didn't we? And it's going according to plan, isn't it?"

It was in April, 1942, a month after the Marcus raid, that Halsey and his battling task force were on the loose again, on the ferrying job for Jimmy Doolittle and company. The Army flyers were on the *Hornet* while Halsey's flag still flew from the Big E. The task

force streaked toward the coast of Japan with the greatest of secrecy until the morning of the day the Army man had set for his takeoff. Then a Japanese patrol boat was reported.

"Sink it! Knock the hell out of it!" stormed Halsey, and his cruisers immediately obliged by blowing the small craft sky high in a shower of kindling. One of the cruisers, however, picked up a survivor, who was promptly interrogated and, much to the surprise of his examiners, talked freely and willingly.

Early that morning, said the Japanese sailor, he was on lookout duty on his ship. Sighting some planes in the sky, he ran down to his skipper's cabin.

"Captain," he said, "come up on deck quickly."

"Why?" inquired the sleepy captain.

"Aircraft can be seen," said the sailor.

"Oh, they're ours," yawned the captain. "Now, go away."

Dutifully, the sailor went back to his post and remained for an hour, or until he felt it necessary to relay more information to his skipper.

"Captain," he said this time, "two of our beautiful aircraft carriers now are in sight."

At that the captain tumbled out of his bunk, hurried to his bridge, focused a pair of binoculars on the ships and turned to the sailor.

"They're beautiful, all right," he said, "but they're not ours."

Carefully putting the glasses back in their case, the Japanese skipper handed them to the sailor, bowed low



and said, "Excuse me, please," then drew his pistol and shot himself.

Doolittle had hoped to wait until afternoon to take off, but decided not to delay after the patrol boat incident, for fear the craft had radioed Tokyo, and the first of his planes left the *Hornet's* flight deck at 8:23 A.M. Halsey messaged every good wish to Doolittle and as soon as the last of the Army's planes was airborne, the admiral swung his force about and headed for home, still at top speed. Naturally, he was deeply concerned with the success or failure which might attend the daring mission on which the Army bombers were bound, and could not be pried away from his radio, which was tuned to Tokyo.

"God help them," said Halsey. "They'll need it."

Around noon the Japanese announcer suddenly stopped in the middle of a sentence, then trailed off in a high falsetto of excitement, while sounds could be heard like ash cans rolling down stairs.

"That's it!" cried Halsey. "They made it!"

In Pearl Harbor, the admiral hardly had reported to his chief, Nimitz, before he and his force were off to the South Pacific, on a mission which laid Halsey up for three months, although he found no combat. Over the American grapevine had come word that the Japanese were massing their naval strength for a push. Halsey's task force, and everything else that would float for the United States, were sent to intercept the victory-drunk enemy.

Worried for fear he would not arrive in time, Halsey

drove his charges hard through the phosphorescent seas and across the equator under the Southern Cross, but drove himself harder, fretting and planning. Receiving word that the enemy was headed for the Coral Sea, he turned to cross their path, but as he was about to make contact—when he was but an hour or so from his quarry and his flyers were set to drive in for the kill—he got an urgent message from Nimitz to turn back. Shivering from nervous frustration he swung away from the waters which were to be the scene of our important later triumph, and started back. The urgent development which led to his recall was the sighting of the Japanese fleet headed for Hawaii. This was something that had to be stopped at any cost, as was accomplished in the tremendous battle of Midway although Halsey could not get there in time to participate.

However, by the time the *Enterprise* steamed into Pearl Harbor from the Coral Sea, a very sick man was on the admiral's bridge. For more than six months Halsey had lived there, bearing the immediate responsibility and weight of practically all the fighting in which the Navy had engaged. At least he had spearheaded our attacks, and the strain, combined with the nervous tension of the race southwestward and back, had knocked him out. His body was covered with agonizing welts and he was taken to a hospital where he spent June, July and August of 1942, slowly recovering but driving his doctors and nurses to distraction with his insistence that he was well, and for goodness sakes

let him out of this world of bedpans and thermometers, back to his world of shells and bombs.

When he left his task force, Halsey of course also parted company with his flagship, the Big E, but as had happened with other ships and was to happen again in the future, the carrier seemed to have absorbed his color and courage, and by the end of the war it was mentioned in whispers by both Americans and Japanese, but for very different reasons. To the latter, the *Enterprise* was something straight out of hell. To the Americans, she was a little bit of heaven.

Charles A. Rawlings wrote a fanciful story, "The Big-E and the Divine Wind," which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*,\* September 1, 1945, and which assessed the niche which the ship had carved out for herself in American naval history. Said Rawlings, in part:

Seventy-five miles east and south of the tip of the Japanese home island of Kyushu, shortly after dawn on the fourteenth day of May, she had taken the worst the enemy could give—a perfectly flown suicide hit into her forward elevator. . . . It was assumed it (the damage) would be terrible.

Her younger sisters, the *Franklin* and the *Bunker Hill*, home all charred and stinking of death, had saddened and horrified America. Kamikaze—Divine Wind—the Japanese had named their new desperate tactic after a mythical gale that had saved the empire

\* The quotations appear by permission of the editors of the *Saturday Evening Post*.



The Admiral confers at sea with Vice Admiral McCain in the stateroom of Halsey's flagship. (*International*)



Halsey mapped his campaigns wherever there was a job to be done. Here he confers on Bougainville with Brig. Gen. H. A. Turnage (hand around tree). On Halsey's left is Maj. Gen. Roy Geiger. (*U. S. Marine Corps*)

from invasion by Mongol hordes centuries ago. It seemed at the moment to be blowing like a hot dragon's breath against our principal naval offensive weapon, line carriers. I dreaded the first sight of the *Enterprise*.

High and dry in the largest graving dock in Bremerton (Washington) she was waiting. The fine State-of-Washington morning sunshine was gilding her rusty old garboards, and a thousand of the Navy's best ship workers were swarming over her like gnomes. The huge gantry cranes of Navy repair were gliding like hunchbacked, crotch-bound monsters around her on their wide tracks, and a great percussion orchestra of riveting and shaping hammers was rat-tat-tatting against her warty old skin, and blue-arcng welding torches were warming her insides.

"You will treat this affair," she said with the dignity and aplomb only she among ships possesses, "simply as one small episode in my crowded career. If it is possible . . . to reach that little Japanese upstart, that Kamikaze fellow, in his Samurai heaven, will you please tell him about compartment 305-A and how we handled his bomb? Rags and toilet paper! That will explode his pride. He may be a hero to his Shinto confreres, but to me he was only an excuse to get to my masseuses and beauty specialists again. Heavens, I was needing it."

With bold North Pacific sunlight throwing such stark light and shade, she looked, under her bow

flight-deck overhang, for all the world like a slightly toothy dowager with red rusty bangs. She roused suddenly.

"This could be an opportunity for you, young man," she said, "to let my country know something of my achievements. It is high time it knew. Only last month the people out of the *Essex* dared to try to steal my nickname, The Big-E. Said I was The Little-E. My sailors bashed their noses bloody in a fine street brawl, and it will not happen again, but it just shows you how things are going with all this new construction coming out and history piling up so fast. I could not . . . engage in the Coral Sea, but I have launched and fought in every section in the Pacific from Pearl Harbor to Okinawa. 'The *Enterprise* against Japan.' That is how things stood once. You could do a world of good, young man, with a small piece defining my—er—seniority. That is a more tactful word than 'superiority.' The Navy thinks it a better word. It could only be a partial history, of course, ending up with this Kamikaze fellow, name of Tomi Zai. My best fighting stretches ahead. . . ."

The old harridan! The old, valiant, splendid, irascible, bulwark-of-America, testy old lady. We should have known. Trust her; trust her, at a time when the whole fleet, the whole nation, needed a lift, to be the one to catch a Kamikaze in rags and toilet paper! Oh, wipe your eye for her, U.S.A. Get ready to call her someday, when this war is over, when they

write the big black histories—get ready to call her—

“You mustn’t call her that,” a COMINCH staff officer warned. “Think, man! She was launched in 1936. Commissioned in 1938. Why, there are not only details, there are whole institutions in the newer construction that she cannot have. She can’t be America’s greatest ship.”

O.K., Brass Hats! Maybe! But ship greatness is something more than gadgets and knots and degrees of turning radius and fire control. It is welded-in, rusted-in constant courage. It is astounding, persistent luck that is not luck but being in the right place, in the right trim, at the right time. It is being tears in the eyes of bluejackets along the waterfront as they talk about her, and pride on the lean faces of admirals, and jealousy in the little loving hearts of Navy wives because she is a rival for their men’s dreams and thoughts. The Big-E started being America’s greatest ship a long time ago, as life is reckoned in this Japanese War.

Rawlings thereafter, in his story, traced the spectacular and destructive career of the Big-E down to the day when Tomi Zai, the Kamikaze fellow, swooped out of a cloud and hit the *Enterprise*, and concluded:

Tomi’s remains lay tucked tightly in a corner near his blackened engine. He had a flexible head something like a rag doll’s, a heavily muscled and hairy short torso and part of an attached right arm. He still wore most of his tunic and shirt and in his



pocket was a billfold with his name and credentials. The buttons of his tunic were rich prizes. They were black and bore in bas-relief, the insignia of the Divine Wind—a three-leaved cherry blossom.

One by one the Big-E's people passed and stared at him. The distance between their live, clear American eyes and his glazed dead ones was the distance of infinity. Men who loved life, looking at a corpse that had once loved death. There can be no greater gulf than that. There was one point of contact. Commander John D. Blich, USN, who had flown with Scouting 6 and now is air officer in the carrier, pushing a charred fragment of debris off Tomi gently with the toe of his boot. "The little guy could fly an airplane," he said.

Someone . . . put Tomi over the side, and the *Enterprise* came home.

# 10



**H**ALSEY returned to active duty quietly and without fanfare. The first the fleet knew of it was an announcement by Admiral Nimitz during a presentation ceremony on board the *Saratoga* at Pearl Harbor, on September 15, 1942. The chief had some medals in his hand, and the sailormen who had won them were lined up in front of him, with their mates banked two-thousand deep behind. He hesitated, before beginning to pin the honors where they belonged, looking around.

“Boys, I’ve got a surprise for you. Bill Halsey is back.”

The bulldog of the carriers stepped forward. The officers and bluejackets sent their cheers echoing across the waters. Halsey waved a grateful response and retired, his head down to hide the tears which dampened his eyes.

After a month around the base, the admiral boarded a Coronado flying boat and set off for the southwest on a tour, after which, he thought, he would head up an-

other task force, similar to the one he had relinquished the previous June. But as he stepped ashore at Noumea, he was handed a dispatch which informed him that he had been appointed commander of the entire South Pacific area, including the South Pacific force of the U. S. Pacific fleet.

He read the message over several times. This was handing him a terrific assignment, since the outlook was anything but promising in that part of the world. The Marines were hanging on at Guadalcanal by their teeth, and these the Japanese threatened to extract almost any day. Our fleet units had been on the receiving end of some lacings which hadn't helped their morale, particularly when the enemy caught a flotilla of cruisers with their guard down one night, sinking four, the *Astoria*, *Quincy*, *Vincennes* and the *Canberra*, the last an Aussie. Over in Australia General Douglas MacArthur was still trying to convince a lot of people that the Japanese could be stopped in New Guinea, and that it wasn't necessary to give up the northern one-third of the Australian continent, and to fight along the so-called Brisbane line.

If Halsey had what was needed in the South Pacific, he wasted no time in using it. His various commanders wanted to know if he had any instructions, and that was when he startled them with the three words:

**"ATTACK Repeat ATTACK"**

Shortly thereafter, on Guadalcanal, he decorated a squad of heroic Marines, using them as a sounding board for his whole area, and giving currency to the

line for which, afterwards, he was to become best known:

“Kill Japs! Then, kill more Japs!”

Continuing his swing around his territory, he was pleased to see how fast his words had traveled and how they were being taken to heart. On Tulagi the Marines had erected a big sign.

“Halsey says kill more Japs! We will!”

At the same time he was the cause for many sleepless nights on the part of his fellow officers, such as Marc Mitscher, the lean, little rawhider who was to raise so much havoc at a later date with his fast carrier task forces in Japanese waters. Just now he commanded a segment of the vast area under Halsey, and he told his chief that the latter's courage was admirable, but suggested that it might be a good idea for the admiral to stay at his headquarters at Noumea, where his chances of remaining whole and healthy were vastly greater than in some of the danger spots he insisted on visiting, not only from Japanese snipers but malaria and dengue mosquitoes.

“And especially,” pleaded Mitscher, “please stay away from the Russell Islands, for the mosquitoes there will pump you so full of malaria we'll be able to fry an egg on your forehead.”

Halsey merely flew back to his quarters at Noumea, called for coffee and went to work figuring out how to stop a heavy section of the “Tokyo Express” which was reported en route to battle the Americans on Guadalcanal and happy, no doubt, to act as a committee of welcome for the new commander in the South Pacific.

It was a busy night for both the admiral and his coffee-maker, Second Class Cook Frederick Natel, forty-five, a Blackfoot Indian with a thick Spanish accent, who hailed from the reservation near Chinook Park, Montana. Natel had acquired his accent at school in Mexico City, and had been in the Navy since 1917, and presided with dignity and decision over his small pantry, with its four burners, pots and cups.

His wife and five "well-spaced" children awaited him in Montana, and Natel said, "When the war ees over, it weel geeve me great pleasure to seet under a tree while my squaw fans me to keep me cool and keep the flies off and my keeds come running with extra special good food."

At dawn the conference between the admiral and his staff broke up, and the forces under his command went out to see what they could do about the oncoming enemy. What ensued is a thrilling episode.

This is what has become known as the Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands, lasting for two days, October 25th and 26th. American airmen stopped the Japanese cold and then turned them back, sinking two battleships, two carriers, three heavy cruisers, one light cruiser and one destroyer. The American losses were a carrier, a destroyer, a tug and a patrol boat, and at the end the enemy was in full flight. Halsey flashed the news in typical language.

"We licked hell out of the Japs!"

The little yellow men didn't stay away long. They were willing to fight, too, and soon were on their way

back, this time in genuine force. They were out to reinforce Guadalcanal in strength, push the Marines off the island and, incidentally, destroy the American fleet and its impudent new admiral. The Santa Cruz Islands affair had gotten under their skin. They knew they would have to contend with American air power, of course, but felt they could meet that, as long as too many heavy ships of the line didn't show up. The Americans so far had only a comparative few, and did not seem to be risking them. Hence they were confident, and once more poured down the slot—the channel through the middle of the Solomons, which they had been utilizing for their piecemeal attacks—and they really came in formidable fashion.

This time they met American ships and American sailormen who had listened to Halsey and who fought like the jut-jawed admiral, which meant that they picked the best situation possible under the circumstances, and then let fly with every weapon in their possession. They kept striking and hitting, hard, fast and often, according to the formula given them, and they pounded the heart out of the enemy, although again this cost good ships and many good men.

The admiral had warned, "You can't make an omelette without breaking the eggs."

This was the Battle of Guadalcanal, starting on Friday, November 13th, and continuing until the night of the fifteenth. At 2 A.M. on the thirteenth a force of American cruisers and destroyers, under Rear Admiral Daniel J. Callaghan, went after the Japanese battle-

ships and escorts deploying to bombard the island. Peering into the darkness from the bridge of his flagship, the heavy cruiser *San Francisco*—a bridge which already had been damaged the day before by a Jap suicide plane—the admiral made out the dim shapes of the enemy dreadnaughts. Behind him were his own ships, heavy and light cruisers in a column, flanked by destroyers. Taking the *San Francisco* to the head of the line of Japanese ships, Callaghan started a classic naval maneuver. With his main batteries he engaged the first one, a cruiser, while his secondary batteries trained on a destroyer. Both enemy ships went down in a blazing ocean. The American ships, at top speed, each picked themselves a target and the night became alive with gun flashes, exploding powder magazines and burning fuel tanks.

When his sights disclosed an enemy battleship, with booming 14-inch guns, Callaghan drove in with his 8-inch-gunned cruiser until the range had been closed to 2,000 yards, then peppered away, finally leading his force directly between two lines of the enemy. The confused Japs started shooting at each other. The *San Francisco* left the dreadnaught on fire, but the last enemy salvo tore through the Yankee cruiser's bridge, claiming the lives of Callaghan and Captain Cassin Young, the *San Francisco's* skipper (who had commanded the *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor, had there been blown into the water, only to swim back to carry on the fight). Among those knocked unconscious was Lieutenant Commander Bruce McCandless, who recovered

his senses to find he was the senior officer remaining alive on the *San Francisco*. He took command and kept the gallant craft at the head of the line until the action was concluded.

As this American force pulled away, the Japanese apparently thought they had taken the full attack, and they started to come on again, slowly, when out of the deep darkness came another unit, commanded by Rear Admiral Norman Scott, striking them with all the fury of the previous assault, laying open great wounds along their decks and in their hulls. They had expected a hit-run blow from the Americans, in line with previous experiences in the Solomons, not this real slugging which was to continue into the morning, although Scott lay dead on his flagship, his body torn by shell fragments. Just to make sure the enemy had no chance for any moment of rest, a swarm of PT boats, submarines and planes from Guadalcanal took up the contest and hammered them all day. That night another American unit, including nice, new battleships, under Rear Admiral Willis A. Lee, Jr., bore down on what was left of the Japanese and administered the knockout with 16-inch shells from his dreadnaughts. By late morning no more enemy craft could be found, except four cargo vessels beached on the island. These were destroyed and the battle was over.

The Japanese came back down the slot again, in about two weeks, but without power. Two months afterwards they abandoned Guadalcanal. There was plenty of hard bitter fighting to be done elsewhere, but the



Americans had nearly broken the back of Japanese naval strength in the violent fighting here. The enemy lost two battleships, eight cruisers, six destroyers, eight troop transports and four cargo ships. Between twenty thousand and forty thousand soldiers went down with the last. Two American light cruisers and seven destroyers were destroyed, and severe damage was suffered by a number of other ships, but the sacrifice was most important in shifting the balance of sea power back to the United States.

Admiral Nimitz said, “. . . Japanese attempt . . . completely frustrated by aggressive action of . . . Halsey and his forces . . . enemy transport force almost annihilated . . . major victory was obtained by our gallant forces.”

So far all to the good!

“Are you going to keep on fighting around the Solomons?” a correspondent asked Halsey, wondering if the scene of conflict would move northward.

“What the hell’s the difference where we fight,” said Halsey, “so long as we’re killing Japs?”

“Well, it’s on to Tokyo, one way or another, then?”

“Exactly right,” said Halsey, “and I want to be there.”

“What do you think of the Japs now?”

“They haven’t changed. They’re still rats.”

“What will they do next?”

“Not having the mentality of a rat, I couldn’t say.”

Less than a week after the Battle of Guadalcanal, on November 20, 1942, President Roosevelt nominated

Halsey to be a full admiral, breaking all precedent, and that same afternoon his home town of Elizabeth, N. J., fractured all records for paying tribute to a native son. The city of a hundred and ten thousand population closed schools, broke out flags and bunting, rang church bells, blew factory whistles, and Mayor James T. Kirk said of Pudge Halsey's recent activities, "We have won what is possibly the outstanding naval victory of the Twentieth Century, and it was gained by an American fleet under the command of a native born Elizabethan."

At Noumea, meanwhile, the ever curious correspondents asked the admiral about his flyers.

"They're the most superb gang I ever dreamed of," he said. "I knew they were good, but they were so damned good they even surprised me, and that goes for all the airmen on Guadalcanal, Army, Navy and Marines."

"Is this a war of attrition?"

"It's a war of knocking hell out of the Japs," said Halsey.

Five days after his nomination, Halsey's appointment as a full admiral came through. Calling in a fellow officer who was headed for the States, Halsey said, "I want you to do something for me." He took off his three-starred pins and handed them to the officer. "Please," he said, "give those to the widows of Admiral Callaghan and Admiral Scott and tell them that it was the fighting guts of their husbands that got me my four stars."

After that he took off his necktie with the comment, "I can work better without it," and then sent an order

throughout his fleet banning neckties for all officers and men. "The time taken," he said, "to tie and untie neckties each morning and evening constitutes, in the aggregate, a tremendous waste of manpower."

After putting all his neck gear in the bottom of his sea bag, Halsey took off for New Zealand, dropping a few war hints as he boarded his plane.

"We'll keep on killing Japs," he said, "wherever they are, and we'll go right on sinking their ships. When their carriers are all gone, our battleships will move in to beat them. Battleships will play a decided role in this war before it ends, and remember I'm an airman. It's ridiculous to say that one weapon, or one branch of service, will win for us. We're all united and we'll all play our parts, and that's why we won't lose."

In New Zealand, on the last day of 1942, the admiral was asked for some predictions for the new year, and he proved to be in fine fettle. This was the interview from which he was to hear for a long time.

"We have the initiative," he said first. Then, warming up, he stuck out his jaw. "Hirohito, your time is short!"

"How short?" asked a correspondent.

"Allied troops," said Halsey, in a very firm and determined voice, "will enter Tokyo within twelve months!"

This was nothing short of sensational. Persons in various high walks of life, such as admirals, generals, top-drawer politicians and statesmen had been explaining that America hadn't really started on Japan, since

Germany would have to be settled first, and that the war in the Pacific would therefore take years and would be long, bitter and bloody. They were right, of course, to the extent that it did take nearly three years more—

"I have no information with which to back up Halsey's statement," brusquely said OWI Chief Elmer Davis, and that was mild comment compared with some of the off-the-record observations in important places.

A number of newspapers said somebody should shut the admiral up but others felt differently. One editorialized, "It is refreshing to have Halsey give us a cheering picture to give us hope that the war will not last forever, as some have tried to tell us. It raises our spirits and makes us all the more eager to get in the final punch." Another editor wrote, "The fact is, had we not been given cheering news from some of our allies, had we not been told of the victories the Russians are winning, and had we not been thrilled by Admiral Halsey's words, we very likely would have become so downhearted that we would have been saying, 'What's the use?' The whole trouble is that the government has fed us nothing but pessimistic news to impress us we really are at war. We know we are." Still another newspaper praised Halsey's statement, although adding that he apparently was a rough character who had cut his teeth on a belaying pin and had done his fishing with a ship's anchor.

Whether praised or criticized, the admiral was undaunted. A week later he took up right where he had left off. In reply to a question, he growled, "Of course

we're going to hold the Solomons. Has there ever been any doubt about it?"

There had, indeed, before the battle of Santa Cruz, and there still was, but the interview went on.

"The Japs will retreat," he said, "for they are short of ships and some other things, and we have superiority in the air and on the water."

"How do you now rate Japs and Americans as fighters?"

"When the war started, I held one of our men equal to four Japs. I now increase this to twenty."

It could be noted in passing, however, that the admiral—no matter how deep, how bitter or how fluent his hatred—never actually underestimated this enemy. Asked if he thought there was anything to the prevalent rumor that Japanese battleships were top-heavy, he said thoughtfully, "At Guadalcanal we sank two battleships, one by direct gunfire at night, and the other by a combination of gunfire, bombing and torpedo action. It took a mighty long time to sink that second fellow. No, I would not say he was top-heavy."

Whatever the reason for Halsey's wild prognostication about a speedy end to Pacific warfare, it actually did serve to give the armed forces, and the country at large, a real shot in the arm. This was the way a fighter should talk! This was the way America wanted a fighting admiral to express himself. It was good to know the feared Japanese monsters were nothing but bob-tailed monkeys!

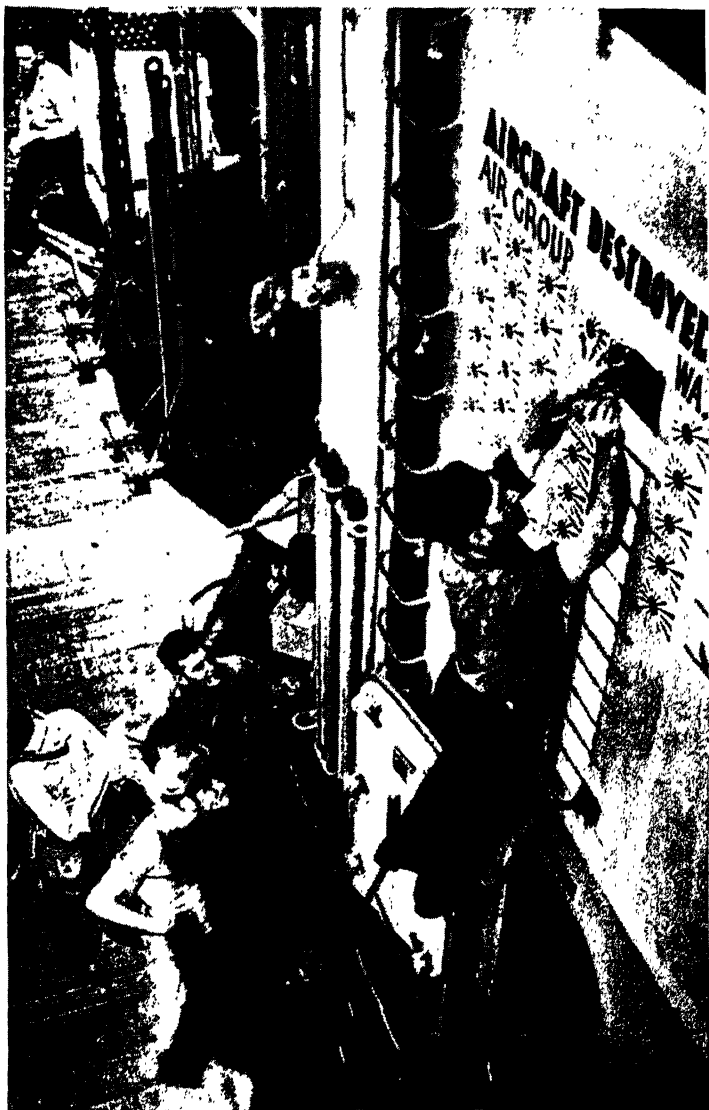
Captain Harold E. Stassen, former governor of



Halsey goes ashore to map forthcoming operations. (*U. S. Navy Photo*)



Halsey chats with reporters at his Bougainville tent. (*U. S. Marine Corps*)



After the Manila attack, pilots of Task Force 58 post the score of Jap planes destroyed. They accounted for over 100 planes. (*International*)

Minnesota, and the admiral's flag secretary during the war, claimed that Halsey coolly and with calculation put out the statement, knowing the effect it would have, particularly on the enemy. "America's strength was low," said Stassen, "and Halsey cheered the fleet and the American people and probably scared the Japs, which was his aim. At that time it was doubtful if we could hold the enemy, should they turn on all their power, but Halsey's scheme worked. They held off for six months, trying to figure what he had that would cause him to make such a prediction, and when they finally decided to try again, we were set."

Halsey was as good as his word—even better, in fact—in promising that there would be no slackening of his offensive pace. He flew back to his base at Noumea and within a month the enemy had completely withdrawn from Guadalcanal, ending the first Solomons campaign. When he announced victory here he didn't mean that the fighting was over in the area, but that his forces were strong enough to turn back any conceivable thrust that might be sent against them.

Many people did not interpret the word "victory" properly, as most strikingly told at the expense of a red-haired editor who fought at Guam. This young fellow, with the common name of Paul Smith and the uncommon faculty of making headlines instead of writing them, was a dynamic, carrot-top refugee from a collar ad who was editing the San Francisco *Chronicle* before hostilities set in. With the Pearl Harbor blitz, he went to war, choosing the Navy, which at once made him a



lieutenant commander in the Remington Raiders, the public relations staff in Washington. Taking his boots off his tea table one afternoon, Smith resigned from the Navy to join the Marines as a private, second class. Seeking action, he had come to the right place. Working his way up through the ranks, he finally made an officers' training camp, emerged as a second lieutenant, and went loping ashore on several Pacific islands at the head of his platoon, winding up in the initial waves of the leathernecks at Guam.

His men were killed in the surf and on the beach and in the jungles. The Japanese were all around him and what was left of his platoon. He couldn't lift a canteen of cold tea to his parched and bleeding lips without having it shot full of holes. It was at this moment that the admiral commanding the operation, from his battleship, calmly issued his communique that the island was "secured." Dashing his canteen to the ground and jumping upon it in a sudden rage, Smith roared, "Why the hell doesn't someone tell the Japs?"

In February, 1943, Halsey's fleet started the Central Solomons campaign by cracking the enemy's lines in the Russell Islands, sixty miles northwest of Guadalcanal, the Americans making landings and beginning the construction of strong defenses. In June, a task force of cruisers and destroyers under Rear Admiral A. S. Merrill bombarded installations on Bougainville and ten days later landings were made at Rendova, covered by two groups of destroyers. On July 6th, the Japanese, partially recovering from the Guadalcanal

pounding, got their "Tokyo Express" under way again, but Rear Admiral W. L. Ainsworth, with a task force of cruisers and destroyers, intercepted it in the first Battle of Kula Gulf, and a week later the second Battle of Kula Gulf—fought under identical circumstances—removed all threat of such enemy naval action as might have jeopardized the landings on the north coast of New Georgia. These actions were effective in preventing the Japanese from using the Kula Gulf route to supply and reinforce their garrisons at Vila and Munda.

Less than a month thereafter, on August 5th, the fall of Munda was announced, climaxing the Central Solomons drive, and the next day, just to make it impressive, an American destroyer force under Commander Frederick Moosbrugger caught a group of enemy transports, escorted by destroyers, and disposed of them neatly in the Battle of Vella Gulf.

On August 7, 1943, in reviewing the even year of warfare in the South Pacific since the landings on Guadalcanal, Halsey said modestly, "We have made an earnest offensive beginning. We have made the waters of the middle Solomons costly and dangerous for the Japanese."

The United States was getting its Pacific war well organized. Admiral Halsey's forces, although still a part of the U. S. Pacific Fleet, had been placed under the strategical command of General MacArthur. Each of these stark individualists, in his respective theater, long had been aiming at the same ultimate objectives, hence the unity of command was the natural outcome of

their northward progress. Army bombers under MacArthur, for instance, had played an essential role in Halsey's success. The real teamwork between the general and the admiral had been of the highest order, and this was to continue throughout the war.

# 11



**H** EAVY fighting continued for many months in the South Pacific, and Halsey worked right along with his staff—long, grueling hours under tight strain. Fifteen able officers made up his staff at that time. They headed such divisions as Intelligence, Air Operations, Gunnery, War Plans and Medicine, along with fleet liaison men, and Marine and Army attaches. Listening and integrating, he made his customary rapid decisions and he saw to it that things moved. His life ashore was as simple as it was at sea. He arose early and hurried to his office to read urgent, secret dispatches, together with the latest reports from the battle-fronts. He lunched lightly—and insisted that those around him eat the same frugal fare, because “it was good for them, whether they know it or not”—and usually had his staff members or officers from other services as guests. Then he held long conferences, visited ships of his command and, in the late afternoon, walked home and went for a twilight swim. His living quarters were comfortable, but unpretentious, and at times he

spent most of the night at his desk at headquarters, reading dispatches from Hawaii, from the Navy Department at Washington, and from ships at sea, getting the materials upon which to base his naval tactics.

Rugged, unassuming, with the anchor tattooed on his right shoulder, he was a veritable sea dog in the surf. He swam powerfully, delighted in battling the waves, and was always out far beyond any of his staff. He would come puffing out of the water at dusk in loose, brightly flowered trunks, drive to his quarters and get ready for dinner. He always donned a fresh, clean uniform for the evening meal.

Upon rare occasions, he found time for nine holes of golf at a rather ragged Noumea course, playing with the same vigor with which he swam or swung on a tennis ball, but his score hovered around the high 80s or low 90s. He cursed himself as "the worst dub in the Navy at golf," but was careful to see that his partners always understood that he blamed only himself for his losses. He once said that when he retired he would move to a home which he owns in Alexandria, Virginia, and spend the rest of his life playing golf. Close associates insist that he has no such intention, however, but will seek something which he feels he can do well and which is important—at least in his own eyes. They cannot visualize him wasting his days on a golf course.

He never lost his sense of humor, and particularly enjoyed spoofing members of his staff. One of them, walking on the beach, skinned his shins in stumbling over a log. Next evening at officers' mess, the admiral turned

to his flag lieutenant and said, "Haven't we something to bring up tonight?" The flag lieutenant reached under his chair, handing Halsey a pair of football shin-guards, which had been found heaven knows where. These were presented, with appropriate remarks, to the luckless individual with the scarred leg bones. When Halsey's officers reported to him that the enlisted men of his fleet were growing restless, wishing to move on north so that they might enjoy more interesting liberties, he said, "We'll by-pass all the smaller towns and turn them loose on Tokyo. That's a liberty town they'll really enjoy."

The admiral never sought publicity, but he simply couldn't help getting it, because he was a natural for the newsmen. However, far from trimming to them, he did not hesitate to pin their ears back when he thought he had reason. He particularly liked the aggressive ones, and never failed to respond when one of them really needed a friend, but he was firm when he thought privileges were being abused. Thus, in March, 1943, he grounded all correspondents in the South Pacific area, except in cases "governed solely by military necessity," it obviously being impossible for a writer to convince the admiral's staff that the war would be lost if he didn't get on a certain plane leaving in the morning. It was the vice president of one of the press associations who was responsible for the modified order. He had flown from Hawaii to Australia in an Army plane, skipping Noumea on the southward flight, but had stopped on his way back. After his interview, he dis-

covered that, under the admiral's directive, Army airplane or not, he would have to take surface ship to Hawaii. He saw he could improve on that by sailing back to Australia, then flying via Army to Pearl Harbor, but he would still lose five days at sea from Noumea, whereupon he sprung his winning argument on Halsey directly.

"What good is it going to do the war effort to make me spend five days on a ship?"

The editor-in-chief of another association escaped a similar dilemma by guile and stratagem. Stepping out of his Army air transport at Noumea to stretch his legs, he was collared immediately.

"Ah, a correspondent."

"My boy, you amaze me."

"What?" said the guard.

"You should study your brassards. Don't you know a chaplain's 'C'?"

"Excuse me," said the other. Surprised at the success of his bluff, the correspondent went on his way.

What angered Admiral Halsey more than anything else at this time was the slur of undetermined origin on the American merchant seaman, in a widely circulated story to the effect that they had refused to unload a supply ship on Sunday at Guadalcanal. "I vigorously and categorically deny that," he said.

He was greatly impressed by the spirit of the non-combatant services. He spent one afternoon inspecting work being done by Seabees on an island which only a few days previously had been in the hands of the Japa-

nese, and at dinner that night paid them a tribute carried far and wide by the press.

"The Seabees were cleaning a field and I had to run most of the time to keep ahead of them and to keep from being shoveled into the ocean. How the Navy ever got along without them, I don't know. They go into a mass of jungle and in no time flat turn it into boulevards and airfields. There is hardly an airport in the United States to compare with the one the Seabees built for us at Munda. There was one man I knew before. He now is the efficient operator of a bulldozer, but before the war he was a wealthy and successful contractor. When hostilities started, he joined the Seabees, and there he was, shoveling dirt around, clearing the way for a new airfield for America."

On a quick trip to Pearl Harbor, Halsey told the Navy Yard's civilian personnel how his fleet depended on their work. "The men in the front lines told me to convey their thanks to you," whereupon production records immediately soared to a new high in the yard.

Meanwhile the admiral had to pass through an agonizing experience faced by high-ranking naval and military commanders in every war. Late in the autumn of 1943, young Bill Halsey III wangled a ride from the *Saratoga*, in the Central Pacific, on one of two planes which were slated for a trip to Noumea and back. The aircraft took off the same day that his father was put to bed, several thousand miles away, with a raging fever, diagnosed by a Navy surgeon as influenza.



The next day one of the admiral's aides came into the sick room. "I'm sorry to have to bring you bad news."

"What is it?"

"Two planes from the *Saratoga*, on a flight down here, are missing."

"That is bad," said Halsey. "Please see that every effort is made to find them. Who was aboard?"

"One of the passengers," said the aide, "was your son."

Halsey sank slowly back on his pillows, then said, "Well, institute the usual searches for missing aircraft, and I hope that God will be kind and preserve Bill, but—" and he compressed his white lips— "I absolutely do not want any unusual efforts made simply because my son was aboard. He's very precious to me, but every American in this war is equally as precious to someone, and my son deserves no special consideration in any way. Please make sure that he does not get it."

The two *Saratoga* planes, their fuel exhausted by adverse winds, crashed into the surf on a strange island, but crews and passengers got ashore without injury, to enjoy the hospitality of friendly natives for a week, or until a search plane spotted them and sent a flying boat to the rescue. This crashed on the take-off, however, and a destroyer had to be called in to carry the rapidly growing American colony away from the island and on to Noumea.

"Nice of your father to go to all this trouble for us," said one of the flyers.

Young Bill was under no illusions but, like the admiral, he had to have his joke. "Yes, it is," he agreed, "but in a way, he had to."

"How's that?"

"My mother! He'd be afraid to face her if he hadn't."

Halsey, Sr., was activated, not by family feeling so much as a definite humanitarian instinct. Thus, in this same period, he ordered a daring operation under cover of darkness, resulting in the rescue of twenty-nine women and children from a Japanese-held island in the Solomons. One of our submarines stood in close to shore, flashed a message. Receiving no answer, the commander was about to shove off, and to come back the next night, but somehow changed his mind and went still further in, finally getting his charges. The next night a large force of enemy ships was in the small bay, landing troops.

The admiral wound up the year 1943 with some rapid-fire successes. In August, Vella LaVella island was invaded. Captain T. J. Ryan, Jr., with four U. S. destroyers intercepted four enemy destroyers and a number of barges north of Vella Gulf, scoring heavily with gunfire until the Japanese retired. The New Georgia campaign ended with the occupation of Bairoko harbor. October saw Captain Frank R. Walker, with a task group of three destroyers, repulse a superior enemy force off Vella LaVella. The Central Solomons campaign ended when the Japs completed the evacuation of their troops from Kilombangara Island and Vella LaVella. Mono and Stirling were attacked in

the Treasury Islands, and landings effected on Mono, preceded by bombardment from a task force commanded by Rear Admiral T. S. Wilkinson. The Bougainville campaign continued with another invasion, and a dozen brushes between light forces, as well as attacks on enemy air bases. At the same time the Bismarck Archipelago operations got under way, with air strikes and bombardments at the important enemy base of Rabaul. American carrier planes hit Kavieng on Christmas day.

For a 1944 New Year's message to the people at home, Halsey got formal.

Allied fighters in the South Pacific ask me to bring you a message. . . . We have our country's enemies in full retreat on all fronts of this war along the equator—on the land, above it; on the sea and under it.

We cannot now be halted.

We aim to fight our way along the straight road to Tokyo. You at home have sent us potent weapons from the limitless American arsenal. They will be put to good use.

As the one whose privilege it is to lead these Allied forces, there are a few words I would like to add.

Your sons and husbands, well trained in the necessary art of warfare, are serving faithfully in this war they did not seek. They have made a record that cannot be challenged. They have fought through a year in which they won many battles—and lost none.

Their achievements bring us full confidence as we face the future.

Never have we confronted the enemy in such numbers. Never have we been ready to strike killing blows in so many places, simultaneously. We propose to strike those blows again and again.

In humble gratitude to Him Who gives us this strength to drive ahead, we resolve no letup, no rest and no compromise.

He made a quick trip to Washington, in January, stopping in Los Angeles long enough to say, "We plan a huge celebration where Tokyo used to be." He admitted he needed more men and materials, but added, "that's a normal request from any fighting man, and as the powers that be have decided to concentrate on the other side of the world, we'll have to wait our turn in the Pacific."

He pointed out that the Japanese had suffered severe losses among pilots. "They're throwing green pilots at us, and we're taking care of them in a workmanlike manner."

From Washington, he went to his daughter's home in Delaware and told a reporter, "First, the Huns have got to be polished off, then we'll get the equipment we need to polish off the monkeys."

"Are the Japs so very tough?"

"They're tough rats when they're well fed, otherwise they're easy to beat, like any other rat. We're starving them now."

He advocated no peace until American troops were in Tokyo and snapped, when asked if he'd heard anything about a major enemy peace offensive brewing for 1944, "There is no bigger liar in all history than the Jap."

Toward the last of January, he was back in the South Pacific, directing the final stages of the greater Solomons campaign—which closed with violent surface bombardments of enemy troop and supply concentrations, a landing on Green Island in February, bitter fighting on the ground on Bougainville until the Japs abandoned that struggle on March 25th, and then Marine landings on Emirau Island in the St. Matthias group. The occupation of Emirau ended the South Pacific campaign. Halsey had worked himself out of a job down that way, and Admiral Nimitz announced in June that he would be relieved by Vice Admiral J. H. Newton, calling him back to Pearl Harbor to take command of the Third Fleet.

The Secretary of the Navy gave him a Gold Star in lieu of a second Distinguished Service Medal, "for exceptionally meritorious service . . . for conducting a brilliantly planned and consistently sustained offensive . . . and for being a forceful and inspiring leader . . ."

He also received the Order of the Bath from British Vice Admiral Sir Bruce Fraser and his associates called him, "Sir Bill," until he told them frankly, "You can go to hell."

Halsey, with his South Pacific successes, was the first

commander in the war to wind up a complete campaign. He had done more to cripple and defeat Japan than all other Pacific commands combined. His forces had sunk more warships, destroyed more planes, killed or neutralized more troops and gained possession of more bases vital for victory. His staff estimated that at least four thousand, eight hundred enemy planes and a hundred and fifty thousand men had been destroyed, along with "too many ships to count."

"If the Jap's back isn't broken—and it's certainly broken in this area—his spine is severely bent," Halsey remarked.

His farewell tour of his command was a personal triumph. Starting at Noumea, he visited various atolls and beachheads. At every place, all hands—Army, Navy and Marines—turned out, not that they had been ordered to do so, but because they wanted to see him and to wish him well. He made eight stops, with a brief talk, and the reception accorded him by his men left him with tears in his eyes each time, unable to talk as he climbed back into his plane.

Three months later, Halsey went to sea as boss of the gigantic Third Fleet, nothing comparable to which has ever been seen on any ocean, and it was obvious that the end was not far off for the Japanese. He led his battle-ships, carriers, cruisers and destroyers—all powerful and all fast—for an opening assault on the Palaus, then raged like an avenging angel into the Philippines and the China Sea, taunting the Japs to come out and fight, invading waters that the enemy regarded as his

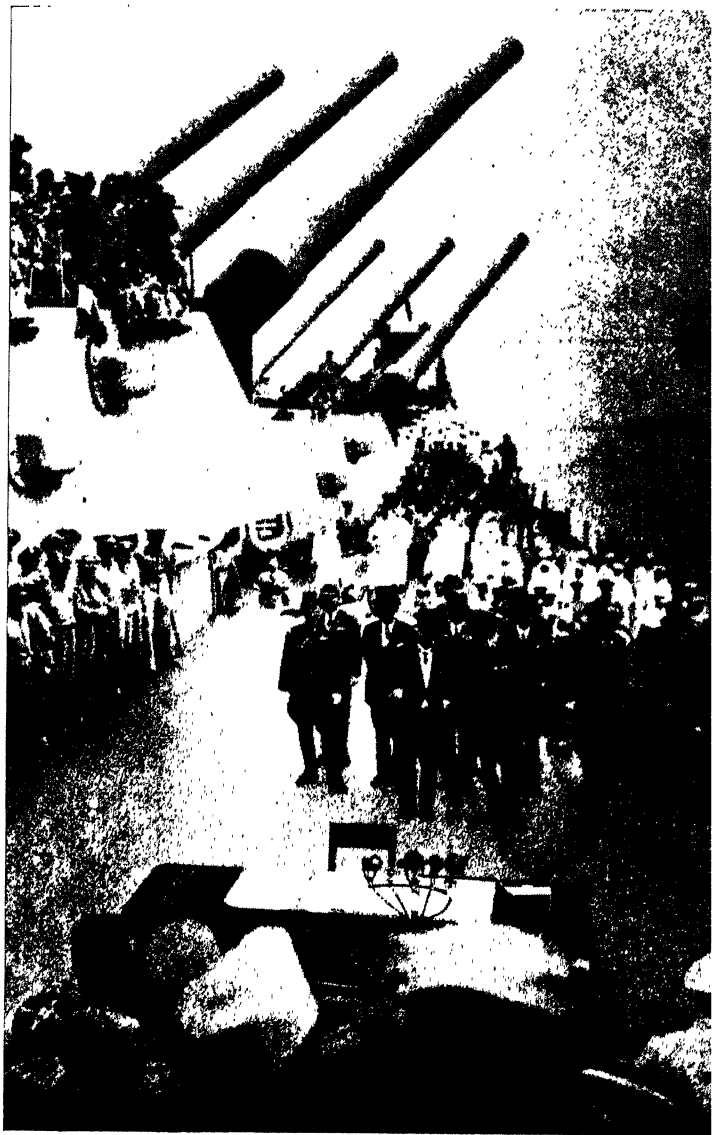
lakes, and inflicting unbelievably one-sided damage in swift raids and violent pitched battles.

On September 20th and 21st, the war came back, after two and one-half years, to the Island of Luzon, with a smashing two-day attack by carrier-based aircraft. It was called the Second Battle of Manila Bay, and the Japanese losses were staggering, including forty ships sunk, eleven probably sunk, and nearly four hundred planes destroyed. The American loss was eleven aircraft.

In October, the Third Fleet joined with Vice Admiral Kinkaid's Seventh Fleet, the latter operating under General MacArthur's command, to put the general and his army ashore at Leyte for his long-promised return to the Philippines. Then was fought the tremendous Battle for Leyte Gulf, which really marked the finish for the enemy's once proud navy.

Halsey personally was responsible for the time and the place of this initial assault on the Philippines. The story was well known to correspondents, and the admiral finally confirmed it at a Washington press conference.

"The first day we went into the Central Philippines with the Third Fleet," he explained, "we steamed back and forth about forty or fifty miles off the coast of Samar, and to our surprise got practically no worthwhile opposition. Our pilots were knocking out Jap planes right and left, everywhere. One of our flyers was shot down where it happened that guerrillas were able to take charge of him. The next day we got him back,



THE PAYOFF, Jap emissaries line up on the *Missouri* for the Surrender





Not the Emperor's, but a white horse. Halsey's dream comes true.



He receives a Gold Star from President Roosevelt. (*International Photos*)

probably with a PT boat or float plane, and he gave us certain information on how weak the Japs were, which led me to believe that the time was ripe to hit there, and not waste our efforts elsewhere. I sent along a recommendation that we combine my forces, which were lined up to go into various places, with MacArthur's forces and move into Leyte immediately. Admiral Nimitz and General MacArthur picked up the ball and in less than twenty-four hours we got the decision to go into Leyte. MacArthur had planned to land at Mindanao, but by quickly shifting everything around he was able to hit Leyte only five days after the date originally set for Mindanao. That was a very violent alteration in plans, but the general was ready for it, because he had alternate plans that covered this very thing, although I didn't know that at the time of my recommendation."

As MacArthur's troops started to land, the weather closed down and the flyers from Halsey's fleet could not get through the overcast to furnish the protection for the soldiers, who were swarming ashore and battling grimly with desperate Japanese. Over his radio the admiral could hear his pilots tell of their inability to find their targets, and their discussion as to whether it would be better to turn back. At this point he gave one of the war's finest illustrations of the power wielded by a dynamic leader. He radioed an appeal to his flyers.

"Your comrades in arms," he said, "are dying on the beach at Leyte. They need your help. I know you will not fail them. Save the lives of those gallant men who

are trying so hard to win a victory for all of us."

Every Navy flyer who was headed for a carrier turned around and made his way through the heavy weather to play his important part, pounding the Jap defenders into submission.

The Leyte Gulf action finally destroyed the enemy's sea power, but for long critical hours threatened to bring disaster to the admiral, who had driven one of three Jap fleets away and chased another, only to find that the one he thought was headed for home had turned around and was about to slaughter the American troop concentrations at Leyte. Fortuitously it ran into a force of our baby flattops which managed to occupy it until Halsey could tear back with some of his big, new battleships and put it to rout permanently.

The battle was so important, both to Halsey and the United States that the reports made on it by General George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the Army, and Admiral Ernest J. King, Chief of Naval Operations, should be quoted completely. First, General Marshall's report:

Toward the end of August Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet began a probing operation in the western Carolines and the Philippines. His carrier planes struck at Yap and the Palau Islands on 7 and 8 September, and the next two days bombed Mindanao. On the morning of the 12th, Admiral Halsey struck the central Philippines and arrived at a conclusion which stepped up the schedule by months.

The Octagon Conference was then in progress at Quebec. The Joint Chiefs of Staff received a copy of a communication from Admiral Halsey to Admiral Nimitz on 13 September. He recommended that three projected intermediate operations against Yap, Mindanao, and Talaud and Sangihe Islands to the southward be canceled, and that our forces attack Leyte in the central Philippines as soon as possible. The same day Admiral Nimitz offered to place Vice Admiral Theodore S. Wilkinson and the 3d Amphibious Force, which included the XXIV Army Corps, then loading in Hawaii for the Yap operation, at General MacArthur's disposal for an attack on Leyte. General MacArthur's views were requested and two days later he advised us that he was already prepared to shift his plans to land on Leyte 20 October, instead of 20 December as previously intended. It was a remarkable administrative achievement.

The message from MacArthur arrived at Quebec at night, and Admiral Leahy, Admiral King, General Arnold, and I were being entertained at a formal dinner by Canadian officers. It was read by the appropriate staff officers, who suggested an immediate affirmative answer. The message, with their recommendations, was rushed to us and we left the table ~~for~~ a conference. Having the utmost confidence in General MacArthur, Admiral Nimitz, and Admiral Halsey, it was not a difficult decision to make. Within 90 minutes after the signal had been received in Québec, General MacArthur and Admiral Nimitz

had received their instructions to execute the Leyte operation on the target date 20 October, abandoning the three previously approved intermediary landings. General MacArthur's acknowledgment of his new instructions reached me while en route from the dinner to my quarters in Quebec.

That day the 1st Marine Division of General Geiger's III Marine Amphibious Corps, with a combat team of the 81st Infantry Division in reserve, landed in Peleliu in the Palau group. Two days later the 81st Division landed on Angaur, an island south of Peleliu.

The War Department on 16 September relayed to General MacArthur a report from General Stilwell to the effect that the Japanese offensive in central China would soon result in capture of the eastern China airfield from which Maj. Gen. Claire L. Chennault's Fourteenth Air Force had planned to support operations in the northern Philippines. MacArthur replied that Admiral Halsey's carrier task force had so severely reduced hostile air capabilities in the Philippines, Formosa and the Ryukus that it would be possible to move directly from Leyte to Lingayen Gulf without the support of Chennault's air force. Admiral Halsey's carrier planes had destroyed almost 2,000 Japanese aircraft in the probing attacks during September.

On 22 September another combat team of the 81st Division moved to Peleliu, where heavy resistance

was being met. Capture of this island was completed by 30 September except for a few isolated enemy groups which held out in caves for another two months. On 21 September, patrols of the 81st Division landed on Ulithi, meeting no opposition. The main body landed two days later.

The landing on Peleliu coincided with General MacArthur's move to seize Morotai, north of Halmahera with the 31st and 32d Divisions. Despite uniformly stubborn resistance the Japanese had lost a series of islands which were important stepping stones for the return to the Philippines and the ultimate conquest of Japan.

The advance of our forces westward across the Pacific had been accompanied by the steadily expanding strategic operations of the Eleventh Army Air Force in Alaska, the Seventh Air Force in the Central Pacific and the Fifth and Thirteenth Air Forces in the southwest Pacific. In the operations fleet carriers had played a vital part. During the campaigns through the Southwest Pacific and the western mandated islands, General Kennedy's aircraft and those of the Pacific Ocean Areas swung their powerful attacks back and forth in mutual support of the various operations. At the same time the westward advance had resulted in an ability to strike from the air at the foundations of the Japanese war potential—their shipping, petroleum, and aircraft industries.

## *Battle of the Visayas*

On 19 October two assault forces, the 3d commanded by Admiral Wilkinson and the 7th commanded by Rear Admiral Daniel E. Barbey, approached the east coast of Leyte with the Sixth Army under General Krueger aboard. It was an armada of combat and assault vessels that stretched across the vast Pacific horizon. In the covering naval forces were the battleships *California*, *Mississippi*, *Maryland*, *Pennsylvania*, *Tennessee* and *West Virginia* with their screen of cruisers and destroyers. The troops and matériel with which we were to seize Leyte were loaded in 53 assault transports, 54 assault cargo ships, 151 landing ships (tank), 72 landing craft (infantry), 16 rocket ships, and over 400 other assorted amphibious craft. The air cover was provided by planes from 18 escort carriers.

Out to sea Admiral Halsey's mighty carrier task force, which helped prepare the way for the landings by air bombardment, now stood watch for possible Japanese naval opposition to the landings. That day a Japanese search plane discovered this great amphibious force and reported its presence to Admiral Kurita's Singapore fleet, which then constituted 60 per cent of Japan's major naval units. This report precipitated one of the decisive battles of history.

The X and XXIV Corps of the Sixth Army went ashore on schedule the following day after the Navy had paved its way with drum-fire bombardment.

Three days later General MacArthur directed the ground forces to secure their beach areas and await the outcome of the naval battle which was now impending. The Japanese made the decision to commit their fleet in the battle to prevent America's return to the Philippines. Admiral King has described the great naval action which followed. Every American who reads it must be filled with tremendous pride in the achievements of our fighting Navy.

By the 26th it was apparent that the Third and Seventh Fleets had virtually eliminated Japan as a sea power. Her fleet had suffered a crippling blow.

And now, Admiral King's report:

### *Leyte Landings*

During the nine days preceding the landing on Leyte, the task groups sortied from New Guinea ports and the Admiralties and moved toward Leyte Gulf. On 17 October (D-minus-3 day) preliminary operations commenced under difficult weather conditions. By D-day the islands guarding the eastern entrances to Leyte Gulf were secured. The approach channels and landing beaches were cleared of mines and reconnaissance of the main beaches on Leyte had been effected.

After heavy bombardment by ships' guns and bombing by escort carrier planes had neutralized most of the enemy opposition at the beaches, troops of the 10th and 24th Corps were landed as scheduled on the morning of 20 October. The landings were



made without difficulty and were entirely successful. Our troops were established in the central Philippines, but it remained for the naval forces to protect our rapidly expanding beachheads from attack by sea and air.

In the amphibious phase of the Leyte operation, YMS 70 sank in a storm during the approach and the tug *Sonoma* and LCI (L) 1065 were sunk by enemy action. The destroyer *Ross* struck a mine on 19 October and the light cruiser *Honolulu* was seriously damaged by an aerial torpedo on 20 October.

### *Battle for Leyte Gulf*

The Leyte landings were challenged by Japanese naval forces determined to drive us from the area. Between 23 and 26 October a series of major surface and air engagements took place with far reaching effect. These engagements, which have been designated the Battle for Leyte Gulf, culminated in three almost simultaneous naval actions, the Battle of Surigao Strait, the Battle off Samar, and the Battle off Cape Engaño. They involved the battleships, carriers, and escort carriers, cruisers, destroyers and destroyer escorts of the Third and Seventh Fleets, as well as PT boats and submarines.

Three enemy forces were involved. One of these, referred to hereinafter as the Southern Force, approached Leyte through Surigao Strait and was destroyed there by Seventh Fleet units on the night of 24-25 October. A second, or Central Force, passed

through San Bernardino Strait in spite of previous air attacks by Third Fleet carrier planes and attacked Seventh Fleet escort carriers off Samar on the morning of the 25th. Finally, a Northern Force approached the Philippines from the direction of Japan and was attacked and most of it destroyed by the Third Fleet fast carrier force on the 25th.

On the early morning of 23 October, two submarines, *Darter* and *Dace*, in the narrow channel between Palawan and the Dangerous Ground to the westward discovered the Central Force, then composed of five battleships, ten heavy cruisers, one or two light cruisers, and about fifteen destroyers. These submarines promptly attacked, reporting four torpedo hits in each of three heavy cruisers, two of which were sunk and the third heavily damaged. *Darter*, while maneuvering into position for a subsequent attack, grounded on a reef in the middle of the channel, and had to be destroyed after her crew had been removed. Other contacts were made later in the day in Mindoro Strait and off the approach to Manila Bay, resulting in damage to an enemy heavy cruiser.

On the 24th carrier planes located and reported the Central Force (in the Sibuyan Sea) and the Southern Force (proceeding through the Sulu Sea) sufficiently early to permit aircraft from Vice Admiral Mitscher's fast carriers to inflict substantial damage.

The third enemy force, the Northern, was not located and reported until so late on the afternoon

of the 24th that strikes could not be launched against it until the next morning. While these searches and strikes were being made, the northernmost of our fast carrier task groups was subjected to constant attacks by enemy land-based planes.

Although about a hundred and ten planes were shot down in the vicinity of the group, one of the enemy aircraft succeeded in bombing the light carrier *Princeton*. Large fires broke out on the damaged carrier and despite heroic efforts of cruisers and destroyers to combat them, *Princeton* suffered a series of devastating explosions which also caused damage and casualties to ships alongside. After hours of effort to save the ship, it became necessary to move the task group to meet a new enemy threat (the reported sighting of the Northern Force), and *Princeton* was sunk by torpedo fire from our own ships. It should be noted that *Princeton* was the first fast carrier lost by the United States Navy since the sinking of *Hornet* in the Battle of the Santa Cruz Island on 26 October 1942.

### *Battle of Surigao Strait*

A part of the enemy's Southern Force entered Surigao Strait in the early hours of 25 October. Seven ships (two battleships, one heavy cruiser and four destroyers) advanced in rough column up the narrow strait during darkness toward our waiting forces. The enemy was first met by our PT boats, then in succession by three co-ordinated destroyer

torpedo attacks, and finally by devastating gunfire from our cruisers and battleships which had been disposed across the northern end of the strait by the officer in tactical command, Rear Admiral (now Vice Admiral) J. B. Oldendorf. The enemy was utterly defeated. This action is an exemplification of the classical naval tactics of "crossing the T." Rear Admiral Oldendorf had deployed his light forces on each flank of the approaching column and had sealed off the enemy's advance through the strait with his cruisers and battleships. By means of this deployment he was able to concentrate his fire, both guns and torpedoes, on the enemy units before they were able to extricate themselves from the trap. The Japanese lost two battleships and three destroyers almost before they could open fire. The heavy cruiser and one destroyer escaped, but the cruiser was sunk on the 26th by our planes. Other ships of the Southern Force which did not engage in the night battle were either later sunk or badly damaged by aircraft attack. In the night action, the destroyer *Albert W. Grant* was severely damaged by gunfire; our other ships suffered no damage.

### *Battle off Samar*

Throughout the 24th the Third Fleet carriers launched strikes against the Central Force which was heading for San Bernardino Strait. This force consisted of five battleships, eight cruisers and thirteen destroyers. As they passed through Mindoro

Strait and proceeded to the eastward, our planes launched vigorous attacks which sank the new battleship *Musashi*—pride of the Japanese Navy, one cruiser and one destroyer, and heavily damaged other units, including the battleship *Yamato*, sister ship of *Musashi*, with bombs and torpedoes. In spite of these losses and damage, which caused some of the enemy ships to turn back, part of the Central Force continued doggedly through San Bernardino Strait and moved southward unobserved off the east coast of Samar. Our escort carriers with screens, under the command of Rear Admiral T. L. Sprague, were dispersed in three groups to the eastward of Samar, with the mission of maintaining patrols and supporting ground operations on Leyte. Shortly after day-break on 25 October the Japanese Central Force, now composed of four battleships, five cruisers and eleven destroyers, attacked the group of escort carriers commanded by Rear Admiral C. A. F. Sprague. A running fight ensued as our lightly armed carriers retired toward Leyte Gulf.

The six escort carriers, three destroyers and four destroyer escorts of Rear Admiral C. A. F. Sprague's task group fought valiantly with their planes, guns and torpedoes. Desperate attacks were made by planes and escorts, and smoke was employed in an effort to divert the enemy from the carriers. After two and one-half hours of almost continuous firing the enemy broke off the engagement and retired towards San Bernardino Strait. Planes from all three

groups of escort carriers, with the help of Third Fleet aircraft, which struck during the afternoon of the 25th, sank two enemy heavy cruisers and one destroyer. Another crippled destroyer was sunk and several other enemy ships were either sunk or badly damaged on the 26th as our planes followed in pursuit.

In the surface engagement, the destroyers *Hoel* and *Johnston*, the destroyer escort *Roberts* and the escort carrier *Gambier Bay* were sunk by enemy gunfire. Other carriers and escort ships which were brought into the fray sustained hits; these included *Swansee*, *Santee*, *White Plains* and *Kitkun Bay*. Enemy dive bombers on the morning of 25 October sank the escort carrier *Saint Lo*. Approximately a hundred and five planes were lost by Seventh Fleet escort carriers during the Battle for Leyte Gulf.

### *Battle off Cape Engaño*

Search planes from Third Fleet carriers had located the enemy Southern and Central Forces on the morning of 24 October, and had ascertained that they were composed of battleships, cruisers and destroyers, without aircraft carriers. As it was evident that the Japanese Navy was making a major effort, Admiral Halsey reasoned that there must be an enemy carrier force somewhere in the vicinity. Consequently he ordered a special search to be made to the north, which resulted in the sighting by one of our carrier planes on the afternoon of the 24th of the

enemy Northern Force—a powerful collection of carriers, battleships, cruisers and destroyers—standing to the southward.

During the night of the 24th-25th, our carrier task force ran to the northward and before dawn launched planes to attack the enemy. Throughout most of 25 October the Battle off Cape Engaño (so named from the nearest point of land at the northeastern tip of Luzon Island) went on with carrier aircraft striking the enemy force, which had been identified as consisting of one large carrier, three light carriers, two battleships with flight decks, five cruisers, and six destroyers. Beginning at 0840 air attacks on these ships continued until nearly 1800. Late in the day a force of our cruisers and destroyers was detached to finish off ships which had been crippled by air strikes. In that day's work all the enemy carriers, a light cruiser, and a destroyer were sunk, and heavy bomb and torpedo damage was inflicted on the battleships and other Japanese units.

Early on the morning of the 25th, Admiral Halsey received the report that the Central Force, which his carrier planes had attacked the day before, had pushed on through San Bernardino Strait, had turned southward along the coast of Samar and was attacking Rear Admiral Sprague's escort carriers. Consequently, Admiral Halsey dispatched a detachment of fast battleships and carriers to the assistance of these Seventh Fleet units. Meanwhile the Central Force had turned away and begun to retire north-

ward to San Bernardino Strait in the face of the heroic defense put up by the escort carriers and the expectation of attack by other of our forces. Third Fleet aircraft reached this Central Force after it had begun to retire and inflicted additional serious damage. On the afternoon of 25 October our carrier planes probably sank two heavy cruisers and a light cruiser, blew the bow off a destroyer, and damaged four battleships and other cruisers and destroyers. Fast surface ships of the Third Fleet reached the scene of action after the enemy had re-entered San Bernardino Strait. However, they encountered a straggler on the 26th, which was promptly sunk. This straggler was identified as either a cruiser or destroyer.

On 26 October aircraft from Third Fleet carriers attacked the retiring Japanese forces again, doing further damage to the surviving battleships. By the end of that day, the Battle for Leyte Gulf was over and the three enemy forces were either destroyed or had retreated out of range of our ships and planes. Thus the major Japanese threat to our initial Philippine landing was averted and the enemy's total surface power severely crippled. The losses of our Third Fleet in the action amounted to forty planes in combat, in addition to the light carrier *Princeton*.

The Central Force was supposed to have foxed Halsey. It was said that after his initial air strike against this force he had concluded that it was licked, was



headed home, and had raced off with everything he had after the Northern Force, instead of leaving a battleship or two on guard at the San Bernardino Strait to be sure those particular Japanese didn't come back. Also, he was said to have concluded that the Japanese couldn't get through the treacherous strait at night, even if they did turn back, whereas actually they swung around as soon as the admiral and his superior forces were out of sight and negotiated the strait at top speed in pitch blackness and would have burst into Leyte Gulf for a session of turkey shooting on our landing and supply ships which choked the harbor, except for the very fortunate appearance of the little American flattops. Indeed, their commander was so surprised that he wouldn't believe initial reports from his flyers that they had sighted an enemy fleet only a few miles away, headed hell-bent for Leyte. That force, he thought, had been dispensed with the day before.

Halsey explained the situation to the correspondents. "We had been playing with the Jap fleet for two years or more in the South Pacific and we knew how he handled his forces. We knew he had always tried to get us into positions where he could shuttle bombs on us. We discovered two parts of his fleet—the central portion and the southern portion—and we hit them heavily all day. We were thoroughly convinced that they were so severely damaged that they were impotent or next to impotent.

"Then, suddenly in the late afternoon we found what we had been really looking for—the Jap carriers, to

the north. We'd been after them for two days, and we decided unanimously that they were the greatest danger to us. If we'd stayed outside San Bernardino Strait, the Jap's Central Force probably would not have come through, but the carriers in the Northern Force would have flown their planes off, would have bombed us, landed in Luzon, reloaded, come back, bombed us again and gone on to their carriers. They'd have continued shuttling over us that way with bombs. These carriers to the north were a very dangerous threat, not only to us, but to MacArthur's landings in Leyte, and we decided to go after them, particularly as it was the first time we'd ever been able to get the jump on their carriers. In every action up to then, we'd had to split or they'd got the jump on us. But they didn't that day.

"Despite what has been said, we were snooping that Jap Central Force up until 11:30 or 12 o'clock that night. Of course the Jap was snooping us, too. We started north toward his carrier group and he got word—I don't know how, but probably from his snoopers—that we were coming and his carriers started trying to get away. They were a little late, for we put off a flight of our planes at daylight in the north and these planes went in and hammered the enemy good. I had the battle force out in front by that time, all ready to clean up, when I got word our people were slightly in a bad way down toward Leyte, so I turned around with the battleships and headed down there at full speed, putting the two fastest battleships in there ahead of everything. Of course by the time I got there the Jap had seen the

error of his way with his Central Force and had run away again.

"In the meantime, the few surface craft we had left in the north—some cruisers—had gone in and battered the remnants of that northern enemy force. But a few of the enemy ships got away. I personally was heart-broken, because we were very close to contact when I had to turn around. No Jap would have escaped if our battleships had been able to stay up there. I'm afraid I swore."

"An understatement," said Carney.

Halsey then went on to expand his ideas of the general situation. "I'm one of the few people who believed from the beginning that the Japs would break eventually. The handwriting is on the wall now. When the industrialists in Japan see that their empire is crumbling—and the dollar means just as much to them as to an industrialist anywhere—they will get the upper hand of the beasts, apparently from the army, who now are in control of the government, and put out attractive peace feelers. That will be our danger period. They'll appeal to mothers of our men out there, and naturally a mother would want to save her son, without thinking that she is sending her grandson or his grandson to death. And if we negotiate a peace and don't demand absolute and unconditional surrender we will be committing the greatest crime in the history of our country, for the Japs merely would use the peace to build up another war."

"Should we negotiate a peace with the Mikado?"

"There shouldn't be any Mikado when this thing is over."

"Have our Navy flyers been ordered not to bomb the Emperor's palace?"

"They have been instructed not to bomb anything except military objectives, and the palace isn't a military objective. Of course," he grinned, "a B-29, or somebody, might hit it by mistake." Then he dropped a remark which was to lead to more publicity than if he'd sunk another squadron of Japanese ships.

"However," he said, "I want all those flyers to be careful and not kill the Mikado's white horse, because I want to ride it."

# 12

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AT THE White House, Admiral William F. Halsey, Jr., in blues and with his hair slicked down in a part just off the center on the left, and Mrs. Halsey, in furs and a little pancake hat, lunched with President Roosevelt, who was presenting him with his third Gold Star for his work with the Third Fleet and "also for having been a very good destroyer skipper in the old days when I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy."

On his way out, Halsey became reminiscent of those who had pinned stars on him—first, Nimitz, then Secretary Knox, and now the President.

"Do you know," he said to his surprised wife, "only God can give me my fourth one."

He went to his daughter's home for another visit. With his restless energy, he dug in the garden until somebody had to take a spade away from him before he struck a gusher. Finally, he returned to the Third Fleet for that final great drive which would carry him to the end of the rainbow, to Tokyo. Taking over his

command again in the middle of the Okinawa operation, his first official act was to order a few rounds of shells for the Japanese.

"My calling card," he explained.

Then he went ashore, with Carney, and toured the bitterly contested island.

After a three-day sweep of Formosa, he made one of his most publicized remarks. While the Americans maintained radio silence, the Jap propagandists made fantastic claims about damage to Halsey's fleet. When he went on the air he observed sarcastically that his ships, sunk by the Japanese announcer, had been salvaged and were "retiring at high speed toward the Japanese fleet."

With the mighty *Missouri* for his flagship, the admiral in July, 1945, announced he was "ready for the final plunge into the heart of the Japanese empire. The enemy fleet is beaten and broken, and all that's left is helpless, but just for good luck we'll hunt them down."

The *Missouri*, with the admiral squinting into the sun, moved into Tokyo bay at the head of one million tons of fighting steel—one hundred and five United States and twenty-eight British combat ships, and more than fifteen hundred planes. This fleet's historical record of destruction included, in just its final thirty-seven days of relentless operation, more than a thousand Japanese vessels of various types, sunk, beached, burned or damaged, with only one light American surface ship damaged.

On August 27th, twenty-one Japanese emissaries

came aboard the *Missouri*, to confront Carney, who curtly gave them their orders for the final surrender ceremony. Halsey did not condescend to meet them, merely watching them from his bridge. They had come out in a battered destroyer.

"Well, admiral," said an aide, indicating the destroyer, "you've been looking for the Jap fleet. There it is."

Halsey only smiled and turned toward the shore which was thick with homes, beach houses and summer resorts, glaring in the late afternoon sun. The yellow walls, green-tiled roof and tower of the summer Imperial Palace loomed in the distance. Fluffy, cream-colored clouds obscured Mount Fuji but, as Halsey watched, a sudden gust of wind whipped the clouds away and a moment later, the slopes of the sacred mountain could be seen.

"You once," said a newspaperman, "expressed the view that you'd like to hang the Emperor. Has there been any change?"

"No," said Halsey.

An inquiry if he thought the Japs might sneak in a final burst or two from their shore batteries brought the opinion, "I think they've got the word that they are thoroughly whipped by this time, although of course I don't trust the vermin."

With cold eyes, he watched the surrender, and what he saw on his flagship was ably described by President Ted Dealey, of the Dallas, Texas, Morning News, in a dispatch to his paper. Wrote Dealey:

Eleven nondescript Japs, puny representatives of a puny race, stood in a little huddle a few feet away from the serried ranks that almost encompassed and engulfed them and listened servilely as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Nations, in trenchant and unsmiling fashion, laid his orders down on the line.

If the Japs had not deserved this, if the elements of outraged justice and revenge had not entered into the picture, if the torture and the sufferings endured by hundreds of thousands of American, English and Chinese boys could have been forgotten, if the dreadful pages of Bataan and Corregidor could have been torn from the book; if the blood murderously let at Singapore, on Iwo Jima, Tarawa and Okinawa still were not dripping onto the hearts of shocked and angry peoples scattered all over a vengeful world—the scene would have been almost pitiful.

The eleven little Japs clustered together, standing almost shoulder to shoulder as if for mutual protection, looked like a kindergarten football team about to take the field against the Washington Redskins or the Green Bay Packers.

There was hardly an American or an Englishman or an Australian or a Netherlander but stood a head taller than these wizened and bandy-legged representatives of that inferior race that had the hallucination it could conquer the world.

General MacArthur was no less than magnificent. Some there are home in the States and some there are out here who have bitter words for this Supreme

Commander for the Allied Nations. They would have swallowed them this Sunday morning.

Standing erect and grim, youthful-looking in spite of his years, handsome as an eagle, agile as a college athlete, firm and incisive of voice, MacArthur made you proud you were an American and proud, too, that such an American as he was here, too, to speak for the mothers and fathers back home whose hero sons will never come back to welcome arms.

It was a beautiful gesture, too, when MacArthur, in tones that could be heard all over the big ship, asked General Wainwright and the English General Percival to step forward and accompany him to the table as he prepared to sign. And wonderful and heartening, too, when he turned and presented the first pen he used to the emaciated Wainwright and the second to that other former prisoner of the Japs, General Percival.

There was nothing histrionic in MacArthur's quick gestures as he passed these pens back over his shoulder.

It was almost with reverence and tenderness that he put them into the hands of these men who had suffered so greatly.

One's eyes continually turned back to that measly—there's no other word for it—Jap delegation that Hirohito sent out to endure the direct ignominy of defeat. Not a man in it looked half a man. If this is the flower of the Japanese empire, God pity the weed in the garden.

On the front row stood a civilian in a high silk hat, a badly-fitting alpaca cutaway coat, striped trousers, and battered black shoes. He had a wooden leg and wore horn-rimmed glasses.

In the next place stood a pygmy in green uniform, booted and spurred, with a peaked hat and yellow fouragere on his right shoulder—a ridiculous figure of a fighting man, a figure reminding one more than anything else of a little boy who had got a 5- and 10-cent store soldier's suit for Christmas.

Behind these, in two close standing rows stood more chimpanzees in human clothing, two additional ones with silk hats and striped trousers, another civilian in a white suit with a battered felt hat and well-worn gloves held tightly behind his back, and six additional Lilliputians in shoddy green uniforms—five of them booted and spurred and the last with long trousers, baggy at the knees.

Gulliver stood behind the microphone placed close to the table and imperiously gestured to the Japs to sign.

After the ceremonies, Halsey went ashore, and was trapped by his own petard, or at least by Major General William C. Chase, commanding the First Cavalry Division, who had a white horse saddled and bridled.

"It's not the Emperor's," said the general, "and it's not exactly white, but it's the best we can do, and you'll have to ride it. You've been bragging what a horseman you are."

Halsey, however, was as good as his word. After reviewing an honor guard in the division's bivouac area on the outskirts of Tokyo, the admiral got aboard the horse, white with black markings, and rode slowly around the field.

Dismounting, Halsey said, "Please don't leave me alone with this animal. I haven't been on a horse for thirty years and I've never been so scared in my life." He quickly patted the nag farewell as the cavalrymen applauded. As it was an unscheduled ride, he had, of course, left his silver-mounted saddle, presented to him by the Reno Chamber of Commerce, aboard his flagship.

About that time a Navy directive came out: "The use of insulting epithets in connection with the Japanese as a race or as individuals does not become officers of the U. S. Navy."

"I'll have to reform," Halsey said, "but I still would like to kick the little bastards' teeth in. The war ended too soon. There are too many of them left."

With all of his brave words, however, Halsey showed the effects of the terrible strain of the war. His hands were shaky and there were new and deep lines in his face. En route home from Japan, he stopped at Pearl Harbor and in a subdued voice told the correspondents that he had requested the Navy to retire him. He was thirteen months short of the statutory retirement age of sixty-four.

"I'm an old man," he said, "let the young fellows take over."

The advance notice of the interview said that caution

would be appreciated in questioning the admiral. He learned of this, and laughed.

"You don't know how much trouble I get into every time I talk," he said. "My wife especially has asked me to be more dignified in my expressions."

But, try as he might, he couldn't resist temptation. "The one person I wanted to meet in Tokyo," he said sadly, "I couldn't find."

"Who was that?" a newsman inquired.

"Why, the keeper of the zoo." The admiral explained that during one of Japan's celebrations of the mythical sinking of the United States fleet, several prominent citizens were interviewed, including the keeper of the zoo, who said he hoped "that Halsey fellow was rescued alive from the sea because I have a special cage for him in the monkey house."

With that, the admiral bade the correspondents farewell. He was leaving the Pacific where he had written so much history in blood and courage. It was a gloomy moment. But as he prepared to arise from a big desk to close the interview, he reached down and pulled up a toy with blond mane and tail and a little saddle.

"I got that white horse, after all," he grinned.

In Elizabeth, New Jersey, it is agreed that November 7, 1945, was the most extraordinary day in the city's long history, far eclipsing the previous celebration in 1942. Thousands of extra persons milled in the city's main streets, in which confetti and ribbons of paper were ankle deep. Church bells tolled, whistles screeched and fire sirens that were tied down made an ear-splitting

medley, but this noise was not enough to drown out the mighty roars of the mass of people come to do honor to a native son come home—the boy who had gone away Bill Halsey, and come home Admiral William Frederick Halsey, one of history's immortals.

The big to-do all centered around Scott Park, in front of City Hall. But Bill Halsey's first stop that morning, after he arrived by airplane, was at Pingry School. He strode into the gymnasium where some of his old classmates waited with the new generation of Pingry boys. He looked around, as if recalling old and familiar scenes and incidents, and then faced the boys while their headmaster concluded his efforts to quiet their ebullient demonstration.

"I haven't much to say to you except that I envy you," he began. "I would give anything I have today to change places with you, to be starting out instead of just finishing up."

When he had concluded, the school's cheer leaders leaped to their feet. The gymnasium reverberated with the old Pingry locomotive that ended with Halsey! Halsey! Halsey! Halsey! as the Admiral walked out, his face a picture of a man unable to control his emotions.

Nor was it the tough, acid-tongued Halsey the world knew who faced the throng at City Hall and watched the police struggle to prevent persons being hurt in the enthusiastic crush to get closer to him. After the welcoming speeches and the presentation of a silver tea service from the city, Halsey concluded:

"I feel that this is given to me just as this great ova-

tion has been given, and I accept it with due humility and humbleness as the representative of the finest fighting men in the world, whom I have been privileged to command. I cannot say enough for them."

Then, after a visit to his birthplace he went back to Washington, and on to California. On November 22, at San Pedro, he ordered his four-star admiral's flag pulled down from the *South Dakota* and turned over command of the Third Fleet to Rear Admiral Howard F. Kingman.

He carried souvenirs of his career to Annapolis and presented them to the Naval Academy. One of them was the flag of the battleship *Nagato*. As he turned it over, he said, "If anybody wants to spit on it, he is perfectly welcome."

He added, "I'm under orders not to call them in public what they are. I still think in private what they are, and they are."

It is a Halsey tenet that—

"The enemy is conquered and has been forced to bow his collective knee to us, the victors.

"But he is unregenerate.

"It is our cross, our duty to make him regenerate.

"This can't be done in a day. It may take decades, generations."

That Halsey will continue to speak out in defense of this tenet and in the interest of his country is evidenced by his frank statements since then. In 1946, weeks before Senator Arthur Vandenburg and others called upon the State Department to alter its course and adopt a forth-

right unequivocating policy in Europe and Asia, Halsey stood up and criticized the Department for lack of realism and a "muddled approach" to post-war problems. "Peacetime security lies with the State Department, not the Army and Navy," he pointed out, adding, "It should be made to bear that responsibility and made to bear it in the open," and "Neither the Army or Navy ever started a war."

There is no doubt that Halsey will continue to speak up whenever he considers it to be necessary; and, let the chips fall where they may, that he will continue to serve his country courageously, as one born to fight.

The End

BORN TO FIGHT is the story of the real Halsey. It is the story of a soft-spoken, stocky lad who grew up in the atmosphere of Annapolis and the Navy, who chose the Navy for his career as his father had done before him, and who, by sheer will and singleness of purpose, made the grade—to the very top. This is a story every American will take to heart.

